

# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

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## HORATIAN LYRICS.

HORACE TO VIRGIL.

ODE III. OF BOOK I. — AD VIRGILIUM.

"Sic te Diva, potens Cypri."

MAY that lovable Goddess, the Cyprian Queen,  
And the brothers of Helen, that bright constellation;  
And from every foul wind may old Æolus  
screen  
Thy bark, for he rules all the winds in creation.

And O ship—that art trusted e'en now to convey  
My Virgil to Athens, the land of the stranger—  
Bring thy passenger home in all safety, I pray,  
And save the best half of my Being from danger.

That man must have had a thrice-fortified heart  
Of oak or of brass, who first tried navigation;  
From the shelter of port who had courage to part,  
And to face a sou'-wester without consternation.

A wind that, when met by his foe the nor'-east,  
Lays about in a way that is perfectly frantic;  
Lashes Adria's waves till they're foaming like yeast,  
And rouses or soothes the uncertain Atlantic.

What manner of death could that mariner dread,  
Who could look the sea-snake in the face without winking;  
Who could gaze on the breakers, with foam-shivered head,  
As they rose all around him, and dreamt not of shrinking?

In vain a wise Providence severed the lands,  
And girdled them round with the streams of old Ocean;  
Since to shipbuilding men turned their impious hands,  
And would find, if they could, the Perpetual Motion.

Mankind are in mischief a go-ahead race,  
Forever inventing and hunting for evil;  
Prometheus—I cite him in proof of my case—  
Brought fire down to mortals, in league with the Devil.

And ever since fire was brought down from the skies,  
Consumption and fevers have worried the nations;  
Man's life has grown short since the baking of pies,—  
He has ruined his stomach by cooking his rations.

Then Dædalus tried to make way through the air  
Upon wings—a device not conceded to mortals;

There is nothing too hard for a bold man to dare,  
Since Hercules burst e'en through Acheron's portals.

In our folly we try feats of daring and dread,  
In aerial cars through the firmament driven;  
We call down the lightnings of Jove on our head,  
For our crimes try too sorely the patience of Heaven.

ODE III. OF BOOK II.

IN WHICH THE POET SUGGESTS A PICNIC.

"Æquam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem."

KEEP a stout heart when times are bad, my boy,  
And don't forget when things are looking better,  
To guard against extravagance in joy,  
For Death *will* come—a foe no man can fetter—

Whether your life has passed in cheerless gloom,  
Or 'midst the song and dance and mirth and revel;  
Unmindful that forever gapes the tomb,  
Where every man at last will find his level.

Then—to a nook where aged trees entwine  
Their mingling arms, and cast a grateful shadow;  
And crystal streams leap forth to cool your wine,  
Then run, exulting, towards the sunny meadow—

Bring wine and olives, and too short-lived flowers,  
And every choice invention of kind pleasure;  
While young and rich, and while the Sister-powers  
Leave still unclipped your life's uncertain measure.

For you must quit your country-house and club,  
River and park, and well-beloved plantations;  
And all you die possessed of—there's the rub—  
When you are gone, must go to your relations.

Art thou a millionaire? Canst trace thy blood  
Right upwards to the Conquest?—'tis no matter;  
Still you must die and cross death's sable flood,  
Just like a pauper, or a common "hatter."

Our lines in one great Central Station meet;  
From out the dread urn each one's ticket's shaken  
Sooner or later; and our final seat  
In the Down Train must certainly be taken  
When the bell tolls.

Blackwood's Magazine.

KNAPDALE.

From The Quarterly Review.

PROSPER MERIMEE: HIS LETTERS AND WORKS.\*

No literary event since the war has excited anything like such a sensation in Paris as the publication of the *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Even politics became a secondary consideration for the hour, and academicians or deputies of opposite parties might be seen eagerly accosting each other in the Chamber or the street to inquire who this fascinating and perplexing "unknown" could be. The statement in the "Revue des Deux Mondes" that she was an Englishwoman, moving in brilliant society, was not supported by evidence; and M. Blanchard, the painter, from whom the publisher received the manuscripts, died most provokingly at the very commencement of the inquiry and made no sign. Some intimate friends of Mérimée, rendered incredulous by wounded self-love at not having been admitted to his confidence, insisted that there was no secret to tell; their hypothesis being that the *Inconnue* was a myth, and the letters a romance, with which some petty details of actual life had been interwoven (as in "Gulliver's Travels" or "Robinson Crusoe") to keep up the mystification. But an artist like Mérimée would not have left his work in so unformed a state, so defaced by repetitions, or with such a want of proportion between the parts. With the evidence before us as we write, we incline to the belief that the lady was French by birth, and during the early years of the correspondence in the position of *dame de compagnie* or travelling companion to a Madame M—— de B——, who passes in the letters under the pseudonym of Lady M——. It appears from one of them that she inherited a fortune in 1843; and she has been confidently identified with a respectable single lady residing in Paris, with two nieces, and a character for pedantry fastened on her (perhaps unjustly) on the strength of the Greek which (as we shall see) she learned from Mérimée.

\* *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Par Prosper Mérimée, de l'Académie Française. Précédées d'une Etude sur Mérimée, par H. Taine. Paris, 1874.

The extraordinary amount of interest taken in her is owing to something more than the Parisian love of scandal, gossip, or mystery. Prosper Mérimée belonged to that brilliant generation of which MM. Thiers and Guizot are the last, and he will be remembered longer than many of those by whom he was temporarily outshone. His character was no less remarkable than his genius; and the strangely contrasted qualities that formed it will be found almost as well worth studying as his works. It was because he was an enigma when living that people are so eager to know everything concerning him when dead. Was his cynicism real or affected? Had he, or had he not, a heart? Did he, or could he, love anything or anybody at any time? Was he a good or bad man? a happy or unhappy one? These are among the problems raised by the letters, and which M. Taine proposes to solve, or assist in solving, by his acute and discriminating "Etude."

I have often [he commenced] met Mérimée in society. He was tall, upright, pale, and, with the exception of the smile, he had the look of an Englishman; at least, he had that cold, distant air which checks all familiarity from the first. To see him was enough to feel in him the phlegm natural or acquired, the self-command, the will and the habit of being on his guard. In ceremony above all, his physiognomy was impassible. Even in intimacy, and when he related a droll anecdote, his voice remained unbroken and calm: no *éclat* or *flair*; he told the raciest details, in appropriate terms, in the tone of a man who was asking for a cup of tea. Sensibility in him was toned down to the point of appearing absent: not that it was; quite the contrary; but there are thoroughbred horses so well broken by their master that, once well in hand, they no longer venture on a gambol.

This closely corresponds with the character of Saint-Clair in his novel of the "Vase Etrusque," evidently intended for his own:—

He (Saint-Clair) was born with a tender and loving heart; but at an age when we too easily receive impressions which last through life, his too expansive sensibility had provoked the raillery of his comrades. Thenceforward he studied to conceal the outward and visible signs of what he regarded as a dishonouring

weakness. . . . In the world, he obtained the melancholy reputation of insensible and indifferent. . . . He had travelled a great deal, read a great deal, and only spoke of his travels and his readings when it was exacted of him.

We have our doubts whether the original inborn bent of a character was ever changed in this manner: whether a warm, loving nature, with sympathetic yearnings, was ever effaced or kept under so as to impress a general conviction of insensibility. Nor do we think that any man can adopt a bad habit like that of habitually suppressing his most generous and ennobling impulses, without damming up or vitiating their source. He will end by at least partially becoming in sad earnest what he began by simulating. We have recently seen in the "Autobiography of Stuart Mill" to what extent both head and heart may be impaired by the abuse of the analytical process; and Mérimée, although he suffered less from it, practised it to the extent of rendering anything like a sustained illusion an impossibility. He constantly recalls the scene in "L'Homme Blasé" (or Used-up), when the hero, about to strike, suspends the blow to feel by how many beats per minute the rising emotion has accelerated his pulse. "He passed through life (says M. Taine) *en amateur*: one can hardly do otherwise when one has the critical disposition: by dint of reversing the tapestry, one ends by seeing it habitually on the wrong side. In this case, instead of handsome, well-placed figures, we see fag-ends of thread: it is then difficult to engage, with abnegation and as a workman, in a common work — to belong even to the party which we serve, even to the school which we prefer, even to the science which we cultivate, even to the art in which we excel; if at times we descend into the *mêlée* as volunteers, we more frequently hold aloof."

Fortunately for the indulgence of his humour, unfortunately perhaps for the development of his powers, Mérimée had a small independent fortune and a place which exactly suited him — the inspectorship of historic monuments. He was elected a member of the Academy in 1843, and of the imperial Senate (with a

salary of 30,000 francs) in 1853. When he first formed the acquaintance of his *Inconnue* he was thirty-seven years of age, and a recognized celebrity, if not quite in the fulness of his fame. The precise period is fixed by a letter, dated Paris, February, 1842, in which, apologizing for not sending her some Turkish slippers, he sends a Turkish looking-glass instead. "Perhaps you will like it best; for you strike me as having become still more *coquette* than in the year of grace 1840. It was in the month of December, and you had on stockings of ribbed silk: that is all I remember." It was quite in his way to be thinking, when he wrote this, of Charlotte first seen by Werther when she was cutting bread and butter for the children, or the image of Matilda Pottingen associated by Rogero with the —

Sweet kerchief, check'd with heavenly blue,  
Which once my love sate knotting in.

It appears from frequent allusions that the lady had pretty feet and ankles, and prided herself on her *bottines*. He is also enthusiastic in his praise of her hands, her hair, and her "splendid black eyes."

M. Taine has culled some of the most illustrative passages for the purposes of his "Etude;" but we think it best to take the letters as they come, and leave them to tell their own story. The first of the collection, written in Paris and received in England, begins with a reproach: —

All is mysterious in you, and the same causes make you act in the diametrically opposite manner to that in which other mortals would conduct themselves. You are going into the country; well — this is as much as to say that you will have plenty of time; for there the days are long, and the want of something to do leads to the writing of letters. At the same time, the watchfulness and restlessness of your dragon being less checked by the regular occupations of the town, you will have more questions to undergo when letters are brought to you. Moreover, in a country house the arrival of a letter is an event. — Not at all: you cannot write, but, on the other hand, you can receive no end of letters. I begin to adapt myself to your ways, and I am now hardly surprised at anything. For all that, spare me, I pray, and do not put to too hard a



trial that unhappy disposition which I have contracted, I know not how, to approve of everything you do.

This commencement is the keynote of the correspondence for many years; indeed, until all uncertainty as to the mutual feelings of the pair is at an end, and Mérimée is content to regard his fair correspondent as one who can never, under any circumstances, be to him more than a devoted and sympathizing friend. The letter continues:

I remember having been perhaps a little too frank in my last letter, in speaking to you of my character. A friend of mine, an old diplomat, a man of great sagacity, has often told me; "Never speak evil of yourself; your friends will speak enough." I begin to fear that you take literally all the evil I have said of myself. Understand that my great virtue is modesty: I carry it to excess, and I fear that this will injure me in your opinion. Another time, when I feel better inspired, I will draw up for you the nomenclature of all my qualities. The list will be long.

Johnson gave Boswell the same advice which Mérimée received from his old diplomat, but based it on sounder grounds. Never speak ill of yourself, because, besides being exaggerated in repetition, it will probably be repeated as the result of detection or discovery by others, and not even your indiscreet frankness will be credited to you.

I give you a hundred guesses to say where I was Saturday evening, what I was doing at midnight. I was on the platform of one of the towers of Notre Dame, and I was drinking orangeade and eating ices in the company of four friends and an admirable moon, the whole attended by a big owl who flapped his wings round us. Paris is really a very fine spectacle by moonlight. It resembles those cities in the "Arabian Nights," where the inhabitants had been enchanted during their sleep. The Parisians in general go to bed at midnight, fools as they are in this respect. Our party was strange enough: four nations were represented, each with a different manner of thinking. The tiresome part of it was that there were some of us who, in the presence of the moon and the owl, thought themselves obliged to affect the poetic tone and talk commonplaces. In fact, little by little everybody set to talking nonsense.

I do not know how and by what connection

of ideas this semi-poetic evening makes me think of another which was by no means poetic. I went to a ball given by some young men of my acquaintance, to which all the *figurantes* of the opera were invited. These women are mostly stupid (*bêtes*); but I have remarked how superior they are in moral delicacy to the men of their class. There is only a single vice which separates them from other women—poverty.

A man must be far gone in cynicism to hazard such a paradox, and the "unknown" must have been singularly destitute of feminine dignity and self-respect could she have endured to be told that she was only separated from a class of women, whom he pronounced *bêtes*, by poverty; she herself being little, if at all, elevated above them in that respect. She might have replied in the words of Dickens's stage-coach driver ruined by railroads: "Poverty, sir, is no disgrace to a man, but it's devilish inconvenient." She obviously administered a sharp rebuke, although it failed to convince him of his want of tact and taste, for in his next letter he resumes the topic unabashed.

Frankness and truth rarely succeed with women: they almost always fail. Here are you looking on me as a Sardanapalus, because I have been to a ball of opera dancers. You reproach me this as a crime, and you reproach me as a still greater crime the singing the praises of the poor girls. Make them rich, I repeat, and they will retain only their good qualities. But the aristocracy have raised insurmountable barriers between the different classes of society to let us see how much what goes on without the barrier resembles what goes on within. I will tell you an opera story I heard in this so perverse society.

In a house of the Rue St. Honoré there was a poor woman who never quitted a small room in the garret, which she rented at three francs a month. She had a daughter twelve years old, very neatly dressed, very reserved, who never spoke to anybody. This little girl went out three times a week in the afternoon, and returned by herself at midnight. She was known to be an opera figurante. One day she comes down to the porter and asks for a lighted candle, which is given her. The portress, surprised at not seeing her come down again, repairs to her garret, finds the woman dead on her mattress, and the little girl busied in burning an enormous quantity of letters which she was taking from a very large trunk. She said:

"My mother died last night, and charged me to burn all her letters without reading them." This child never knew the real name of her mother: she is now absolutely alone in the world, and without any other resource than playing the vultures, the monkeys, and the devils at the opera.

The dying advice of her mother was to be virtuous and remain a figurante. She is, moreover, very virtuous, very devout, and not fond of telling her story. Have the goodness to say if this little girl has not infinitely more merit in leading the life she leads, than you have; you who enjoy the singular happiness of irreproachable *entourage*, and of so refined a nature that, to a certain degree for me, an entire civilization is resumed in it.

Gracefully told as is the story, and prettily turned the compliment, the moral is dubious and the reasoning obviously at fault. The poverty of this little girl was rather her virtue than her vice. It perfected and brought out her best qualities: her patience, prudence, filial duty, fortitude and faith. Nor is it by any means clear that, when the trying time of temptation arrived with advancing womanhood, she was not better fitted for resistance than she would have been, had her childhood been surrounded with all the luxuries, vanities, and frivolities of wealth.

He goes on to say that he can only endure bad company at rare intervals, and from an inexhaustible curiosity for all the varieties of the human race.

I never venture to try bad company in men. There is something too repugnant, especially in this country; for in Spain I have often had muleteers and bull-fighters for friends. I have eaten more than once out of a wooden bowl with people that an Englishman would not look at for fear of losing the respect he has for his own eyes. I have even drunk out of the same skin with a convict. It should be added, however, that there was no other skin, and one must drink when one is thirsty.

They were in the habit of interchanging presents. After saying that the water-colour drawing he had promised her was not worthy of her acceptance, and expressing a hope that this would not prevent her from sending him the tapestry destined for him, he adds:

Try to choose a safe messenger. Rule general: Never choose a woman for confidant: sooner or later, you would repent of it. Know also that there is nothing more common than to do evil for the pleasure of doing it. Get rid of your ideas of optimism, and be thoroughly convinced that we are placed in this world to fight against everybody. As to this, I may tell you that a *servant* of my acquaint-

ance, who reads hieroglyphics, has told me that on the Egyptian coffins these two words were often found: *Vie, guerre*; which proves that I did not invent the maxim I have just given you.

His reflections on her sex, or on human nature in general, excited her indignation, and he rejoins:

Your reproaches delight me. In truth, I am the elect of the fairies. I often ask what I am for you, and what you are for me. To the first question I can get no answer: as for the second, I conceive that I love you like a niece of fourteen whom I am bringing up. As to your very moral relative, who says so much evil of me, he makes me think of Thwackum (spelt *Twackum*), who is always saying: "Can any virtue exist without religion?" Have you read "Tom Jones," a book as immoral as all mine put together? If you were forbidden it, you will certainly have read it. What a ridiculous education is received in England! What is the use of it? You are out of breath with lecturing a young girl ever so long, and the result is that this girl is longing to become acquainted with the immoral being towards whom you have done your best to inspire her with aversion. What an admirable history is that of the serpent!

We once heard him enforce this (his favourite) theory by an ingenious story, borrowed from a contemporary. A Comte de —, with or without reason dissatisfied with the attention of a neighbouring Vicomte to his wife, was leaving home for an absence of some days, and had proceeded a short distance from the chateau, when a thought struck him, and he sent back his groom with a message to madame to the effect that something had taken place which compelled him to request that she would on no account admit the Vicomte while he was away. On his return he heard that the Comtesse was confined to her bed, and on hurrying to her heard with surprise that she had been bitten by the great dog in the yard. "But why did you go near the great dog?" "Why did you send back to desire me not to go near it?" Completely mystified, he proceeded to catechise the groom, who avowed and justified what he had done. "I told madame you desired her not to go near the dog, and you see what came of it. If I had told her not to receive the Vicomte, she certainly would have received him, and he would have done her more harm than the dog."

Mérimée's speculations on female dress are more fanciful than sound.

\* Thwackum says: "Can any honour exist independent of religion?"

I study you with lively curiosity. I have theories on the smallest things, on gloves, *bottines*, buckles, &c., and I attach much importance to them, because I have discovered that there is a certain relation between the character of women and the caprice (or, more properly speaking, the *liaison d'idées* and the ratiocination) which makes them choose such or such a stuff. Thus, for example, people are indebted to me for the discovery that a woman who wears blue is coquette and affects sentiment. The demonstration is easy, but it would be too long.

No coquettish Frenchwoman who understood dress ever wore blue, unless it suited her complexion; never, if she chanced to be a brunette.

Where Mérimée shines in his letters as in his books, is in telling a story in the fewest possible words, or sketching a scene by a few rapid strokes, and then pointing the moral or drawing the conclusion in a sentence or two, *e.g.* :—

I went boating the other day. There were a number of little sailing boats on the river carrying all sorts of people. There was one very large in which were many women (of doubtful character). All these boats had come on shore, and out of the large one came a man of forty, who had a tambourine and was playing on it for his amusement. Whilst I was admiring the musical organization of this animal, a woman of about twenty-three approached him, called him monster, told him she had followed him from Paris, and that if he refused to take her with him, he would repent of it. All this took place on the bank from which our boat was about twenty paces distant. The man of the tambourine went on playing during the discourse of the deserted woman, and replied with the utmost coolness that he would have none of her in his boat. Thereupon, she runs to the boat which was moored the farthest from the bank, and throws herself into the river, splashing us most ignobly. Although she had extinguished my cigar, indignation did not prevent me any more than my friends from pulling her out before she could swallow two glasses of water. The fine object of so much despair had not stirred, and muttered between his teeth : "Why pull her out, if she was so eager to drown herself?" We placed the woman in a cabaret, and as it was getting late and the dinner hour was near, we left her to the care of the landlady."

How happens it that the most indifferent men are the most loved? This is what I asked myself, all the time we were descending the Seine : this is what I still ask myself, and what I beg you to tell me if you know.

The solution of the phenomenon, when it occurs, is to be found in that very perversity of human nature on which he is so fond of expatiating. Thus, when the

Unknown tells him that her affections are engaged, he runs on :—

You say that you are engaged for life, as if you were saying, I am engaged for the contredance. So far, so good : my time, it seems, has been well employed in disputing with you about love, marriage, and the rest ! You have not got beyond believing or saying that when you are told *Aimez Monsieur*, you love. Have you promised by a contract signed before a notary as on *papier à vignettes* ? When I was a schoolboy, I received a love-letter, surmounted with two burning hearts strung on an arrow, from a milliner. My school-master began by taking away my love-letter and locked me up. Then the object of this rising passion consoled herself with the cruel school-master. There is nothing more fatal to those in whose favour they are subscribed than engagements. Every obligation is naturally tiresome. In a word, from all this, if I had less modesty, I should draw this final consequence, that if you had promised your love to any one, you would bestow it on me ; me to whom you have promised nothing.

Resolved not to be the heroine of an adventure like that in *La Double Méprise*, Mérimée's Unknown was constantly on her guard. She makes appointments to meet him at public places ; they take long walks together ; she accepts him as her cicerone through museums and picture galleries ; and once or twice (never without a chaperon) occupies a box of his providing at the opera, but takes especial care never to be alone with him in a carriage or a room. In vain does he labour to inspire her with confidence by language that sounds like a prose version of Moore's Ode to Nea :—

Nay, tempt me not to love again !  
There was a time when love was sweet ;  
Dear Nea, had I known thee then  
Our souls had not been slow to meet.  
But, oh ! this weary heart hath run  
So many a time the rounds of pain,  
Not e'en for thee, thou lovely one,  
Would I endure such pangs again.

He tells her that he has not only outgrown the capacity for being in love, but can be on occasions as prudent and self-denying as she could desire :—

Don't be afraid, I shall never fall in love with you. Some years ago, it might have come to pass. I am too old and have been too unhappy. I could not be in love again, because my illusions have procured me many *degaras* in love. I was on the point of falling in love when I started for Spain. It is one of the finest actions of my life. The person who caused my journey has never known anything about it. If I had remained, I should haply have committed a great folly : that of offering to a wo-

man worthy of all the happiness that can be enjoyed on earth, of offering her, I say, in exchange for everything dearest to her, a tenderness that I myself felt to be very inferior to the sacrifice that she would perhaps have made. You remember my moral: "Love excuses all, but we must be quite sure that it is love." Take my word for it, this precept is more rigorous than those of your Methodist friends. Conclusion: "I shall be charmed to see you. Perhaps you will make the acquisition of a true friend, and I perhaps shall find in you what I have long been looking for; a woman with whom I am not in love, in whom I can put my trust. Both of us shall probably gain by being more thoroughly acquainted with each other. Do, however, what your exalted prudence may dictate."

Here he is unconsciously echoing the Byronic apophthegm:—

No friend like to a woman man discovers,  
So that they have not been, nor may be,  
lovers.

He invariably speaks of marriage in a manner to inspire feminine distrust:—

To say the truth, I am terribly out of humour, in thinking of that ceremony which you are going to attend. Nothing makes me more melancholy than a marriage. The Turks, who buy a woman after examining her like a fat sheep, are better than we, who have put a varnish of hypocrisy, alas! too transparent, on this vile bargain. I have often asked myself what I could say to a woman on my wedding-day, and I have found nothing possible, except a compliment on her night-cap.

The devil fortunately must be very cunning to catch me at such a *file*. The part of the woman is easier than that of the man. On a day like that, she models herself after the Iphigenia of Racine; but if she has any observation, what strange things she must see! You will tell me if the *file* has passed off well. You will be courted and regaled with allusions to domestic happiness.

He is thrown into despair on hearing directly afterwards that she is about to undertake in a similar ceremony the part he thinks so much easier than the man's:—

Lady M. announced to me yesterday evening that you were going to be married. This being so, burn my letters: I shall burn yours, and adieu. I have already spoken to you of my principles. They do not admit of my remaining on the same terms of intimacy with a married woman whom I have known as demoiselle, with a widow whom I have known as wife. I have remarked that, the civil *status* of a woman being changed, the ties change too, and always for the worse. In a word, I cannot bear my female friends marrying. If, then, you marry, let us forget one another. Do not,

I entreat, have recourse to one of your ordinary evasions, but answer me frankly.

She does answer him frankly and satisfactorily. His next letter begins, "We are growing very tender. You call me *Amigo de mi alma*, which is very pretty in a friend's mouth." Then referring to the essential point:—

I need not say that I am pleased with your answer. You have even told me, and perhaps involuntarily, many things that have given me pleasure, and especially that the husband of a woman who should resemble you, would inspire you with real compassion. I can easily believe it, and I add that no one would be more unhappy, unless it were the man who should be in love with you. You must be cold and mocking in your fits of crossness, with an invincible haughtiness which prevents you from saying, "I am in the wrong." Add to this the energy of your character, which must make you despise tears and complaints. When, by the lapse of time and the force of events, we shall be friends, then we shall see which of us two knows best how to torment the other. My hair stands on end at the bare thought of it.

She must have been young when they first met, for in the third year of their acquaintance he tells her that she is not old enough to have a heart:—

What is your disease? Are you suffering from any pang or disappointment of the heart? There are some phrases in your last note, mysterious like the rest, which seem to say as much. But, *entre nous*, I do not believe that you have yet the enjoyment of that intestine (*viscère*) called heart. You have pains of the head, pleasures of the head; but the intestine named heart is not developed till towards twenty-five years of age in the 46th degree of latitude. You will contract your black and beautiful eyebrows, and you will say: "The insolent fellow doubts whether I have a heart!" for it is the grand pretension now-a-days. Since so many passionate or so-called passionate romances and poems have been concocted, all women pretend to have hearts. Wait a little. When you have a heart in right earnest, you will give me news of it. You will regret that good old time when you only lived by the head, and you will find that the evils you are now suffering are but pricks of the pin in comparison with the stabs of the dagger which will rain upon you when the time of the passions has arrived.

The hard, cold materialism which abounds in these letters grows tiresome or repulsive when the novelty has worn off and we have got accustomed to the peculiar kind of wit of which it is the seasoning or the source. *On ne plat pas long-temps si l'on n'a qu'une sorte*

*d'esprit*. Neither do we regret the change when the tone of gallantry cools down to the conventional temperature, and the letters assume more of the character of a journal recording the writer's impressions of things and people as they pass.

In March, 1842, after congratulating her on her recent accession of fortune, he writes :—

My Minister has given me leave of absence for three months, and I have passed five in travelling between Malta, Athens, Ephesus, and Constantinople. During these five months, I have not felt bored for five minutes. You to whom I gave such a fright long ago, what would have become of you had you seen me during my expedition in Asia, with a belt of pistols, a big sabre, and—would you believe it?—moustaches reaching beyond my ears? Vanity apart, I should have frightened the boldest brigand of melodrama. At Constantinople I saw the Sultan in polished leather boots and black frock coat, all covered with diamonds, at the procession of the Bairam. There, a fine lady, on whose slipper I had trodden by accident, gave me the grandest of *fist-cuffs*, calling me *glaour*. This was my nearest approach to intimacy with the Turkish beauties. At Athens, and in Asia, I saw the finest monuments in the world, and the most beautiful (if possible) landscapes. The drawback consisted in fleas and gnats as big as larks; so that I never slept. In the middle of all this, I have grown quite old. My firman gives me hair colour of turtle dove: a pretty oriental metaphor to say ugly things. Picture your friend quite grey.

They manage a meeting on his return, and he writes :—

If I must be frank, and you know that this defect in me is incorrigible, I will own that you struck me as much improved physically, not at all morally; you have a very fine complexion, and admirable hair, which I looked at more than your cap, which probably was worth looking at, since you seemed angry at my inability to appreciate it. But I could never distinguish late from calico. You have always the figure of a sylph, and, *blasé* as I am with black eyes, I never saw finer at Constantinople, nor at Smyrna.

Now, for the reverse of the medal. You have continued a child in many things, and you have become hypocritical into the bargain. You do not know how to conceal your first impulses; but you think to mend matters by a host of petty expedients. What do you gain by them? Remember this great and fine maxim of Jonathan Swift: "*That a lie is too good a thing to be wasted.*" This magnanimous sin of being hard to yourself will certainly carry you a long way, and a few years hence you will find yourself as happy as the Trappist, who, after having scourged himself time out of mind, should discover some fine morning that there is no such thing as Paradise.

It is a problem *à la Mérimée* why women will forgive any but really compromising reflections on their morals, sooner than the slightest depreciatory allusion to their looks. Sir Robert Walpole used to say that he could always make up a quarrel between two women if neither had called the other ugly or old. It would seem that Mérimée's charmer was rather pleased than the contrary with his ringing the changes on her falsehood, hypocrisy, and infernal coquetry (his favourite phrase), so long as he is as warm and eloquent as ever on the subject of the hair, the figure, and the eyes. In this same letter he traces her a route for a meditated tour in Italy :—

It is possible that we may meet at the corner of a temple or a circus. I advise you to go straight to Naples. M. Buonnicci will take you to Pompeii. You will go to Pæstum, and you will think of me: in the temple of Neptune, you may say to yourself that you have seen Greece. From Naples you will go to Rome, where you will pass a month in saying to yourself that it is useless to see everything because you will return. Then you will go to Florence, where you will remain ten days. Then you will do what you like. . . . Probably I shall then be at Arles or Orange. If you stop there you will ask for me, and I will explain a Greek theatre to you, which will not interest you much.

You have promised me something in return for my Turkish looking-glass. I rely religiously on your recollection. Ah! great news! The first Academician who dies out of forty will be the cause of my paying thirty-nine visits: I shall pay them as awkwardly as possible, and I shall doubtless gain thirty-nine enemies. It would be tedious to explain to you the *pourquoi* of this fit of ambition. Suffice it that the Academy is now my blue cachemire.

The allusion to the blue cachemire is explained in the next letter: "*A propos* of your blue cachemire, I suspected you of devotion, because devotion in 1842 is a fashion like the blue cachemires. This is the analogy which you did not catch: it is clear enough, however." His instructions for reading Homer are more serious and detailed than his outline of the Italian tour; and the mocking tone is kept under, if not entirely subdued, by the enthusiasm of the scholar for Greek :—

I am very sorry that you read Homer in Pope. Read the translation of Dugas-Montbel: it is the only readable one. If you had the courage to brave the ridicule, and the time to spare, you would take the Greek grammar of Planche and the dictionary of the same. You would read the grammar for a month to



make you sleep. It would not fail in this effect. At the end of two months you would amuse yourself by looking out in the Greek the word translated (in general) literally enough by M. Montbel: two months afterwards you would easily perceive from the embarrassment of his phrase, that the Greek says something different from what the translator makes it say. At the end of a year, you would read an air; the air and the accompaniment: the air is the Greek, the accompaniment the translation. It is possible that this would give you the wish to study Greek seriously, and you would have admirable things to read. But I suppose you with neither dresses to occupy you nor people to show them to.

Everything in Homer is remarkable. The epithets, so strange in French, are admirably appropriate. I remember his calling the sea "purple," and I never understood this word. Last year I was in a little caïque on the Gulf of Lepanto, going to Delphi. The sun was setting. As soon as it had disappeared, the sea took for ten minutes a magnificent tint of dark violet. This requires the air, the sea, the sun, of Greece. I hope that you will never become artist enough to enjoy the discovery that Homer was a great painter.

A little farther on he writes out for her a regular course of Greek reading:

If you have the courage to read history, you will be charmed with Herodotus, Polybius, and Xenophon. Herodotus enchants me. I know nothing more amusing. Begin with the "Anabasis," or "The Retreat of the Ten Thousand"; take a map of Asia and follow these ten thousand rogues in their journey: it is Froissart gigantesque. Then you will read Herodotus: then Polybius and Thucydides: the two last are very serious. Next get Theocritus and read "The Syracusans." I would also fain recommend Lucian, who is the Greek with most wit (*esprit*), or rather most of *our* wit; but he is a sad rake, and I dare not. As to the pronunciation, if you wish I will send you a page that I had written out for your use, which will teach you the best, that is, the pronunciation of the modern Greeks. That of the schools is easier, but absurd. We began writing to each other *en faisant l'esprit*; then we have done, what? I will not remind you. We are now at work on erudition.

Whilst playing tutor he affects towards his pupil the same tone in which Cadenus speaks of Vanessa:

He now could praise, esteem, approve,  
But understood not what was love.  
Her conduct might have made him styl'd  
A father, and the nymph his child.

It would seem that the Roman classics divided her attention with the Greek:

You have done well not to speak of Catullus. He is not an author to be read during the holy week, and there is more than one passage in

his writings which it is impossible to translate into French. We see plainly enough what love was at Rome about the year 50 before J. C. It was, however, a little better than love at Athens in the time of Pericles. The woman were already something. They made men commit follies. Their power has come, not, as is commonly said, from Christianity, but I think through the influence which the barbarians of the North exercised over Roman society. The Germans had exaltation. They loved the soul. The Romans loved little but the body. It is true that for a long time women had no souls. They still have none in the East, and it is a great pity. You know how two souls speak to one another. But yours hardly listens to mine. I am glad you value the verses of Musset, and you are right in comparing him to Catullus. Catullus wrote his native tongue better, and Musset has the fault of not believing in the soul more than Catullus, whom his time excused. . . .

Would you believe that a Roman could say pretty things, and could be tender? I will show you on Monday some Latin verses, which you will translate yourself, and which fit in like wax *à propos* of our ordinary disputes. You will see that antiquity is better than your Wilhelm Meister.

He falls ill, and asks her what she would say if he became (in Homeric phrase) the guest of the gloomy Proserpine:

I should be delighted if you were saddened by it for a fortnight. Do you think this an extravagant pretension? I pass a part of my nights in writing, or in tearing up what I have written the night before, so that I make small progress. What I am doing amuses me, but will it amuse others? I believe that the ancients were more amusing than we: they had not such mean ends: they were not preoccupied by a mass of silliness (*niaiseries*) like us. I find that my hero, Julius Cæsar, was guilty of follies (*bêtises*) for Cleopatra at fifty-three, and forgot all for her, so that he was within an ace of drowning himself actually and figuratively. What man of our generation, I mean amongst the statesmen, is not completely case-hardened, completely insensible, at the age (forty) at which he can aspire to be a deputy? I should like to show the difference of that world from ours, but how to set about it?

He must have set about it by a different line of argument and illustration, if he wished to produce conviction. There have been modern Mark Antonys, if not Cæsars, who would have deemed the world well lost for Cleopatra's eyes. Mérimée must have known an eminent French statesman, with a character for austerity, who when long past forty could hardly meet a very celebrated lady in a room without betraying his feelings by a



flutter or a flush; and it is clear from Gentz's "Diary" that the select few who had undertaken the settlement of Europe at the Congress of Vienna, were quite as much occupied with their own love affairs as with the destinies of nations.\*

Mérimée tries in vain to pass off his candidature for the Academy with an air of unconcern. He is deeply interested in the result, and submits, with a grimace, to the (to him) especially repugnant ceremonies imposed by it. It is the inexorable rule for the candidate to call on each academicien for the personal solicitation of his vote; and some of these compulsory visits have given rise to amusing and characteristic scenes.

When Victor Hugo called on Royer-Collard, he was received with a bow and a stare. "Je me nomme Victor Hugo." "Connois pas." "L'auteur de Notre Dame de Paris, &c. &c." "Je ne les ai jamais lu." "Permettez moi de vous en offrir des exemplaires." "Je ne lis plus les livres nouveaux." *Exit* Hugo in a rage. Mérimée had no reason to complain of his reception.

I find people very polite, quite accustomed to their parts, acting them very seriously. Does it not strike you as ridiculous to say to a man: "Monsieur, I believe myself one of the forty cleverest men of France; I am as good as you," and other drolleries? It is necessary to translate this into polite and varied language, according to the persons.

He was elected on the 14th March, 1843, and on the 17th he writes:—

Why do you weep? The forty chairs (*fauteuils*) were not worth one little tear, I am worn out, broken-down, demoralized, and completely "out of my wits." Then, *Arsène Guillot* (his novel) makes a palpable *fiasco*, and excites the indignation of all the so-called virtuous people, and particularly the women of fashion who dance the polka and listen to the sermons of the Père Ravignan; they go so far as to say that I act like the monkeys who climb to the top of the trees, and having reached the topmost branch make grimaces at the world. I believe I have lost votes by this (so-called) scandalous story: on the other side, I have gained some.

\* Sept. 12, 1814.—"Went to Prince Metternich: long conversation with him not (unhappily) on public affairs, but on his and my relations with Madame (the Duchess) de Sagan."

*Sunday, Nov. 6.*—"Went out at ten. Conversations of different kinds with Metternich. Returned at mid-day. Count Clam: long talk with him on his new passion for Dorothee (Madame de Périgord)."

*Friday, 11th.*—"Visit to the King of Denmark—talked an hour with him. Then Metternich: long conversation, constantly turning more on the confounded women than on business."

Her tears prove the warm interest he had inspired in her, despite her assumed coldness.

Give smiles to those who love you less,  
But keep your tears for me.

There was a crisis towards the end of the year:—

It is evident that we can no longer meet without quarrelling horribly. We both of us desire the impossible: you—that I should be a statue; I—that you should cease to be one. Every fresh proof of this impossibility (of which at bottom we have never doubted) is cruel for both. For my part, I regret all the pain I have caused you. I give way too often to impulses of absurd anger: as well get angry with ice for being cold.

He had obtained a high reputation as an archæologist by his "Notes of Travel" in the South and West of France, which contain the pith of his official Reports, and towards the end of 1843, he was a successful candidate for admission to the Academy of Inscriptions. This second candidature seems to have been more annoying than the first:

You are wrong to be jealous of Inscriptions. My self-love is to a certain extent engaged, as in a game of chess with a skilful adversary; but I do not believe that the loss or gain will affect me a quarter as much as one of our quarrels. But what a wretched calling is this of solicitor! Did you ever see dogs enter the hole of a badger? When they have any experience, they have an appalling look on entering, and they often come out faster than they went in, for he is a most disagreeable brute to visit, is your badger. I always think of the badger when about to ring the bell of an academicien, and, as seen "in the mind's eye," I present an exact likeness of the dog.

Early in 1843 he formed one of a dinner party, given by an academicien to introduce Rachel to Béranger. After dinner Béranger told her that she was wrong to waste her talent in *salons*, that there was for her only one veritable public, that of the Théâtre Français. She listened with an assenting air, and to show how much she had benefited by the advice, played the first act of "Esther."

Some one was required to give her the *réplique*, and she caused a Racine to be formally presented to me by an academicien who was doing the duties of *cicisbeu*. I rudely replied that I knew nothing about verses, and that there were people in the room who, being in that line, would scan them much better. Hugo excused himself on account of his eyes; another for some reason or other. The mas-

ter of the house devoted himself. Imagine Rachel in black, between a piano and a tea-table, with a door behind her, preparing a theatrical effect! This preparation before our eyes was very amusing and very fine: it lasted about two minutes, then she began:—

"Est-ce toi, chère Elise?" . . .

The confidant, in the middle of his reply, lets fall his spectacles and his book: it takes him ten minutes to recover his page and his eyes. The audience see that Esther is getting angry. She resumes. The door behind opens: it is a servant coming in. He is signed to withdraw. He makes a hurried retreat, and cannot manage to shut the door. The said door keeps swinging backwards and forwards, accompanying Rachel with a melodious and very diverting creak. As there seemed no end to this, Mademoiselle placed her hand on her heart and grew faint, but, like a person accustomed to die on the stage, giving time for people to come to the rescue.

During the interlude, Hugo (Victor) and M. Thiers came to words on the subject of Racine. Hugo said that Racine was *un petit esprit* and Corneille *un grand*. "You say that," replied Thiers, "because you are *un grand esprit*: you are the Corneille—here Hugo looked the picture of modesty—of an epoch of which Casimir Delavigne is the Racine." You may guess what became of the modesty. However, the faint passes off and the act is finished, but *fiascheggando*. One who knows Mademoiselle well, remarked: "How she must have sworn this evening on going away." The remark set me thinking.

A still more mortifying mishap once befell Mrs. Siddons in a drawing-room, where she was acting Constance in "King John."

"Here I and sorrow sit:  
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it."

Through some untoward accident in suiting the action to the word, instead of sinking gracefully to the ground, she lost her balance, and came to the sitting posture with a bump that shook the floor and fairly put tragedy to flight.

In November, 1845, he is at Madrid, which he finds changed for the worse since his last visit in 1840. "The bulls have no longer any heart, and the men are not much better than the bulls." Writing again from Madrid in October, 1853, he says:—

No one reads at Madrid. I have asked myself how the women pass their time when they are not making love, and I find no plausible reply. They are all thinking of being empresses. A demoiselle of Granada was at the play when she heard in her box that the Comtesse of Téba was to marry the Emperor. She rose with impetuosity, exclaiming: *En*

*ese pueblo, no hay porvenir* (In this country there is no chance of rising). . . .

The marriage of the Countess de Téba was the turning-point in his life. He was an old and attached friend of her mother, Madame de Montijo, through whom he was named senator, and became an habitual guest of their Imperial Majesties at the Tuileries, Biarritz, Compiègne, and Fontainebleau. Although there is no allusion to the fact in these letters, there is no doubt that he was a valuable assistant to the Emperor in the composition of the "*Vie de César*." The drawback to the advantages of his new position was the estrangement from many old friends: the majority of the French men of letters, and especially the academicians, having proudly held aloof from the dynasty to the last. The consciousness that he was regarded with suspicion and distrust will go far to account for the increasing cynicism with which his letters are seasoned as we proceed. He literally spares nobody. From Madrid again:—

It is the custom here to offer everything that is praised. The fair friend of the Prime Minister sat next me at dinner the other day. She is *bête comme un chou*, and very fat. She displayed tolerably fine shoulders, on which rested a garland with beads of metal or glass. Not knowing what to say, I praised both shoulders and beads, and she replied: *Todo ese á la disposicion de V.*

He is almost always in his caustic mood during his visits to England. Admitting that there was something grand and simple in the invention and execution of the Crystal Palace, he terms it perfectly ridiculous as regards art and taste: "a plaything which costs twenty-five millions, and a cage in which several great churches might waltz."

The last days I passed in London (July, 1854) have amused and interested me. I have seen and associated with (*vu et pratiqué*) all the political men. I have attended the debates on the Supplies in the Houses of Lords and Commons, and all the renowned orators have spoken, but very badly, as I thought. Lastly, I have eaten an excellent dinner. They give excellent dinners at the Crystal Palace, and I recommend them to you—you who are *gourmande*. I have brought from London a pair of garters, which come, I am assured, from Borrin (of Paris). I do not know with what Englishwomen keep up their stockings, nor how they procure this indispensable article, but I believe it to be a very difficult affair, and very trying to their virtue. *The shopman who gave me these garters blushed up to the eyes.*

Mérimée has here fairly outdone the German traveller who, describing the Boyle Farm *fête*, stated that only the wings of the chicken were placed upon the refreshment-tables, because the English ladies could not bear to hear of the leg or *cuisse*. The fact is, Mérimée saw and knew little of English society. He did not lay himself out for it. His manners were reserved, and his name was not one of those which create a sensation in a *salon*. But he had good introductions, and was taken to a few of the best houses by his friends; who will hardly be pleased at the use he made of his opportunities:—

Edinburgh, Douglas Hotel,  
26 juillet 1856.

I am going with a Scotchman\* to see his chateau, but I cannot tell you where we shall stop on the route, which he promises me with abundance of castles, ruins, landscape, &c. I have passed three days at the Duke of Hamilton's in an immense chateau and a very fine country. . . . All over this chateau are pictures by great masters, magnificent Greek and Chinese vases, and books with bindings of the greatest amateurs of the last century. All this is arranged without taste, and one sees that the proprietor derives small enjoyment from it.

*I now understand why the French are so much in request in foreign countries.* They take pains to be amused, and, in doing so, amuse others. I found myself the most amusing of the very numerous society where we were, and I had at the same time the consciousness of hardly being so.

We never heard before that the French are or were so much in request. A cultivated and agreeable Frenchman, like any other cultivated and agreeable foreigner, would be in high request; but unless he spoke English fluently (which is rarely the case with Frenchmen), there are very few English country houses in which, except from motives of politeness, he would be pressed to prolong his stay. Mérimée could be a most pleasing companion when he thought fit; and he does himself great injustice in supposing that he owed his English welcome to an all-pervading sense of wearisomeness or vacuity:—

London, 20th July, 1856.

I have found people here so amiable, so pressing, so overwhelming, that they are evidently much bored. Yesterday I saw two of my former beauties; the one has become asthmatic, and the other methodist: then I made the acquaintance of eight or ten poets, who struck me as a little more ridiculous even than ours.

\* The Right Hon. Edward Ellice: printed twice over "Eliné."

Speaking of Edinburgh, he says:—

The accent of all the natives is odious to me. The women are in general very ugly. The country demands short petticoats, and they conform to the fashion, and to the exigencies of the climate, by holding up their gowns, with both hands, a foot from their petticoats, showing sinewy legs and half-boots of rhinoceros leather, with feet to match. I am shocked at the proportion of red-haired women whom I meet. The site is charming, and the weather has been warm and clear for two days.

In a letter dated from a country house, near Glasgow, August 3, 1856, after bearing testimony to the hospitality with which he is everywhere received, he says:—

I am contracting bad tastes. Arriving here the guest of poor people who have hardly more than thirty thousand pounds a year, I thought myself neglected on finding that they gave me a dinner without wind instruments and a piper in grand costume.\*

I passed three days at the Marquis of Breadalbane's, in driving about in a carriage in his park. There are about two thousand deer, besides eight or ten thousand others in his forests not adjacent to the chateau. There are also, for singularity's sake, at which every one aims here, a herd of American bison, very fierce, which were inclosed in a peninsula, and one goes to see through the clefts of their palisades.† *All the world there, marquis and bison, had the air of being bored.* I believe that their pleasure (bison included?) consists in making people envious, and I doubt whether this makes up for the flurry they are in to be hotel-keepers so gentle and simple. Among all this luxury, I observe from time to time little instances of stinginess which amuse me.

We should not have thought it possible for even a cynical Frenchman to carry away such an impression from Taymouth Castle in 1856. There could hardly be more magnificent hospitality, or a grand seigneur more free from pretension, assumption, or the littleness of wishing to excite envy, than the host. He had a keen sense of humour, with a blunt rough way of giving expression to it, not much unlike Lord Melbourne's; and the fre-

\* At Taymouth Castle, in the time of the late Marquis of Breadalbane, a piper, placed behind a recess, played during the first course, and a complete band of wind instruments during the second; the programme of the music being placed by the side of each plate with the *menu*. A Frenchwoman who heard the bagpipe for the first time at Taymouth, turned to her neighbour with a cry: "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, est-ce que cela s'appelle musique?" The domain of Taymouth is so large that it would require seven-league boots to walk over it in three days.

† There were three or four in an inclosure, bounded on one side by a river.

quency of his hearty laugh was alone enough to refute the notion of his being an habitual sufferer from *ennui*.

That Mérimée should see little beauty in Highland scenery might have been anticipated from a principle of æsthetics incidentally laid down in a letter from Paris in 1843:—

What did you think of the fireworks? I was at an ambassador's who has a fine garden, from which we had a good view. The bouquet was fine. It must be very superior to a volcano; for art is always much finer (*plus beau*) than nature.

The man who thinks a bouquet of fireworks superior to an eruption of Ætna or Vesuvius might, with equal plausibility, maintain that the Grandes Eaux de Versailles are finer than the falls of Niagara.

Turning back a little, we find him recording a rather remarkable dinner in May, 1850:—

I dined yesterday with a bishop and a dean, who have made me more and more socialist. The bishop is of what the Germans call the rationalist school: he does not even believe what he preaches, and, on the strength of his black silk apron, pockets his five or six thousand a year, and passes his time reading Greek.

Salisbury Cathedral is more than lost upon him:—

Salisbury, Saturday 15th June, 1850.

I begin to have enough of this country. I am tired to death of the Perpendicular architecture and the manners, equally perpendicular, of the natives. I have passed two days at Cambridge and Oxford with the reverends, and, all things considered, I prefer the capucins. A Fellow had the *insolence* to ask me to dinner. There was a fish, four inches long, in a great silver dish, with a lamb cutlet in another. All this served in magnificent style, with potatoes in a dish of sculptured wood. But never was I so hungry. This is the result of the hypocrisy of these people. They like showing foreigners that they are abstinent (*sobres*), and, eating luncheon, they do not dine.

I have just committed a blunder. I gave half-a-crown to a man in black who showed me over the cathedral, and then I asked him the address of a gentleman for whom I had a letter from the Dean. It turned out that the letter was addressed to himself. He looked foolish, and so did I: *but he kept the money*.

The man was obviously the beadle or vergier to whom the letter was addressed, with directions to show the foreign gentleman over the cathedral.

Although he always speaks well of the Emperor and Empress, he is no sooner settled in an Imperial residence than he

wishes to get away. In November, 1858—

We shall be detained another day at Compiègne. Instead of Thursday it is Friday that we return, on account of a comedy of Octave Feuillet that is to be acted on Thursday. I hope this will be the last delay. I am, moreover, ill. One cannot sleep in this place. One passes the time in freezing or roasting, and this has given me an irritation of the chest, which exhausts me. But it is impossible to imagine a more amiable host or a more gracious hostess. Most of the guests took their departure yesterday, and we are left *en petit comité*, that is to say, we are but thirty or forty at table.

Besides giving his Imperial host the aid of his classic lore, his varied talents, especially as a writer of fiction, were frequently laid under contribution for the amusement of the company.

We have here (Compiègne) Mademoiselle —, a fine sprig of a girl, five feet six high, with all the pretty manner of a grisette, and a mixture of ease and unaffected timidity, sometimes very amusing. Fears were entertained lest the second part of a charade should not correspond with the beginning (a beginning of which I was the author). "It will go off very well," said she: "we shall show our legs in the ballet, and that will make up for all."—N. B., her legs are like two flageolets, and her feet are far from aristocratic.

More than one of his short novels arose out of discussions in the Imperial circle, and was read over to them by way of testing its probable success with the public.

Being at Biarritz (in 1866), a discussion one day arose as to the difficult situations in which one might be placed, as, for example, Rodrigo (in the *Cid*), between his papa and Chimène, or Mademoiselle Camille between her brother and her Curiaius. The same night, having drunk some over-strong tea, I wrote fifteen pages on a situation of this kind. The thing is perfectly moral *au fond*, but there are details which might be disapproved by Monseigneur Dupanloup. There is also a necessary begging of principle from the commencement of the narrative: two persons of different sexes go together to an hotel; this was never seen, but this was necessary to me; and, in their vicinity, something very strange occurs. It is not, I think, the worst thing I ever wrote, although it was written very hastily. I read it to the lady of the house (the Empress). There was then at Biarritz the Grand-Duchess Marie, the daughter of Nicholas, to whom I had been presented some years since. We have renewed our acquaintance. Shortly after my reading, I received a visit from a policeman, professing to be sent by the Grand-Duchess. "What do you want?" "I come on the part of her Im-

perial Highness to beg you to wait on her this evening with your romance." "What romance?" "That which you read the other evening to the Empress."

I replied that I had the honour to be the jester of Her Majesty, and that I could not work abroad without her leave; and I hurried to tell her what had passed. I expected that the least result would be a war with Russia, and I was not a little mortified that not only was I authorized but entreated to wait on the Grand-Duchess, to whom the policeman had been assigned as factotum. However, to comfort myself, I wrote the Duchess a letter in a sufficiently becoming tone, and announced my visit. I was on my way to carry my letter to her hotel: the wind was high, and in a little side street I met a woman who was in danger of being blown into the sea by her petticoats (the wind having got under them), and who was in the greatest embarrassment, blinded and confused by the noise of the crinoline and—the consequences. I ran to her assistance; I had much difficulty in aiding her effectually, and then only did I recognize the Grand-Duchess. The wind spared her some little epigrams. Besides, she played the good princess with me, and gave me excellent tea and cigarettes, for, like almost all the Russian ladies, she smokes.

The romance he read to these august ladies, was "La Chambre Bleue," afterwards published in a Review, and included in his "Dernières Nouvelles." A young couple, just arrived from Paris, occupy the apartment of honour, called La Chambre Bleue, in an hotel. In the next room, separated only by a wooden partition with folding-doors, is an Englishman, their fellow-traveller on the railway, who had been exhibiting a roll of bank-notes and had quarrelled in their hearing with an ill-looking nephew, after threatening to cut him off with a shilling. The Englishman calls for a bottle of port. "I told him we had none," says the maid. "You are a fool," says the landlord. "We have every sort of wine. I will soon find some port for him! Bring me the bottle of ratafia, a bottle of fifteen sous wine, and a carafe of brandy." This composition was so successful, that the last articulate sound heard in the hotel before the couple retired to rest, was the Englishman exclaiming: "Waiter, bring me another bottle of the same port."

The night-candle burning on the chimney-piece in the blue chamber was more than half consumed, when, in the apartment of the Englishman hitherto silent, a strange sound was heard, such as a heavy body might produce in falling. To this noise was added a sort of crack no less strange, followed by a stifled cry and some indistinct words, resembling an im-

precation. The two young occupants of the blue chamber started. They had probably been suddenly awakened. This noise, for which they were unable to account, had made a sinister impression upon both.

"It is our Englishman dreaming," said Léon, with a forced smile.

Two or three minutes afterwards a door was opened in the corridor, cautiously as it seemed: then it was shut very gently. They heard slow and unsteady steps, which, according to all appearance, sought to escape notice.

"Confounded inn!" exclaimed Léon. "Ah, it is a paradise," replied the young woman, letting her head drop on Léon's shoulder: "I am so sleepy:" she sighed, and fell asleep again immediately. Not so Léon, who could not help thinking of the uncle with the bank-notes, the nephew coveting them, and that dead-sounding blow, like the blow of a club on a bald skull, that stifled cry, that frightful oath, and the muffled steps afterwards. That nephew had the look of the assassin.

While these things were passing through his mind, Léon had his eyes mechanically fixed on the door of communication between the blue room and the Englishman's. There was an intervening space of half-an-inch between the door and the floor. All at once, in this space, appeared something like a dark shining line, moving slowly in the direction of a little blue satin slipper, thrown carelessly near this door. Was it some insect like a centipede? No, it is not an insect. It has no determinate form. Two or three similar lines have penetrated into the room, with an accelerated movement owing to the slope of the floor. They advance rapidly; they come in contact with the little slipper. No more room for doubt! It is a liquid, and this liquid—the colour was now distinctly visible by the light of the candle—it was blood.

What was Léon to do under these circumstances? His obvious duty was to rush to the aid of the Englishman, who might be yet living, or, at all events, to ring the bell and call up the people of the hotel.

To this I reply, first, that in French hotels the bell-handles are there for the sake of ornament, and the ropes are not in correspondence with any metallic apparatus. I will add firmly, but respectfully, that if it be wrong to let an Englishman die close to you, it is not praiseworthy to sacrifice to him a woman who is sleeping with her head upon your shoulder. What would have happened if Léon had given the alarm? The gendarmes, the procureur-impérial and his clerk, would have arrived forthwith. Before asking what he had seen or heard, these gentlemen are by profession so curious that they would have begun by saying to him: "What is your name? Your papers? And the lady? How came you to be together in the blue-room? You will have to appear at the assizes to say that on such a day of the



month, or such an hour of the night, you were witnesses of such a fact," &c. &c.

What appeared to him the most prudent, if the most selfish, course under the circumstances, was to lie still till day-break, then frankly explain to his fair friend the compromising nature of their position, and leave for Paris by the first train before the discovery of the catastrophe. It has been guessed long since by the practised novel-reader. The couple are hurrying away without their breakfast, when the chambermaid is heard calling to the waiter: "Make haste with the hot water for milord's tea. And bring a sponge; he has broken the bottle, and his whole room is flooded with his port."

Several of the letters relate the conception, progress and completion of another romance, originating much in the same manner and similarly composed as an experiment. On the 5th of August, 1869, he writes:

At Saint-Cloud, I have read *Lokys*\* before a very select audience, comprising several demoiselles, who have seen no wrong so far as I could discover. This has encouraged me to make a present of it to the *Revue*, since it causes no scandal.

Either *dame* or *demoiselle* must be gifted with a very lively imagination to be scandalized by this story in the polished and corrected shape in which it eventually appeared in print. The story is supposed to be told by a *savant*, to whom the doctor, in attendance on an insane Lithuanian lady of rank, relates the cause of her insanity:—

She has been insane for more than twenty-seven years, having gone mad from fear. Two or three days after her marriage with the deceased count, the father of our host, she goes with him to the *chasse*. She remains behind or outstrips the sportsmen—I do not know which. Never mind! all of a sudden the countess's little Cossack, a boy of fourteen, gallops up to the count. "Master, a bear is carrying off my mistress." "Where?" "This way." They all hurry to the place indicated: no countess. On one side her strangled horse: on the other, her pelisse in shreds. They search, they beat the cover in all directions. At last, a sportsman exclaims: "There is the bear!" In fact, the bear was seen traversing a glade, still dragging the countess, no doubt to devour her at his leisure in his den, for these animals are epicures in their way. They like, like the monks, to dine quietly. Having been married but two days, the count was very chivalrous: he wanted to throw himself on the bear, hunting-knife in hand, but, my dear sir,

a Lithuanian bear does not let his throat be cut like a deer. Fortunately, the gun-bearer of the count, an idle vagabond, too drunk that day to distinguish a rabbit from a stag, fires his rifle a hundred paces off, without caring whether he hit the beast or the woman.

"And he killed the bear?"

Dead upon the spot. It is only drunkards who make such shots as that. The countess was badly scratched, without consciousness, as you may suppose, and with a leg broken. She comes to herself; but her reason was gone. She is taken to St. Petersburg. Grand consultation: four doctors covered with orders. They declare: "The countess is with child; it is probable that her delivery will bring about a favourable crisis." Nine months afterwards, the countess is brought to bed of a well-formed boy: but the favourable crisis? Nothing of the kind. The count shows her her son. That never fails—in romances. "Kill him! kill the monster!" was her exclamation: it was as much as they could do to prevent her from twisting his neck. From that time to this, alternations of stupid and raving insanity.

The young count, when we are introduced to him, is a handsome and highly accomplished man of twenty-six, but he has odd, eccentric habits, and no dog or horse sees him for the first time without showing symptoms of fear. He has also a curious hunting adventure, which ends very differently from his mother's. This also is related by the doctor:—

"Not a year ago he found himself exactly in the same position, and, thanks to his *sang-froid*, had a wonderful escape." "From the claws of a bear?" "Of a she bear, and the largest that had been a long time. The count attacked her spear in hand. But, with a back-hand blow of her paw, she turned aside the spear, then seized the count and threw him on the ground as easily as I could upset this bottle. He cunningly pretended to be dead. The bear smelt him all over, and instead of tearing him to pieces licked his face. He had the presence of mind not to stir, and she went her way. The bear believed him to be dead. Indeed, I have heard say that these animals never eat dead bodies. We must believe it, and abstain from trying the experiment in our own persons."

We pass over the details to arrive at the *dénouement*. The count is about to be married to a beautiful girl, whom, according to the custom of the country, he brings on the day fixed for the ceremony from her own house to his chateau, where a distinguished company are assembled. As the carriage and four dashes up to the door the horses take fright; the bride utters a cry; when the bridegroom, who has sprung out, seizes

\* The Lithuanian word for "bear."



her in his arms, and carries her up the steps. All of a sudden a woman, of tall stature, pale, worn, her dress in disorder, her hair dishevelled, and all her features contracted by fear, appeared at the top of the steps, without any one knowing where she came from. "The bear," she cried, in the most piercing tones, "the bear! Bring guns. He is carrying off a woman. Kill him. Fire! fire!" It was the countess, who had escaped in the confusion from the persons who had charge of her.

It was a very painful scene. It was necessary to take her away despite her cries and her resistance. Many of the guests were not aware of her malady. Explanations were required. They conversed for some time in whispers. Every face was saddened. "Bad omen," said the superstitious; and they are very numerous in Lithuania.

They gradually recovered their spirits; the wedding banquet was in the first style of Lithuanian hospitality; and the relator was one of the very few who went sober to bed, and fell asleep. He awoke as the castle clock was striking three, and was looking about for his matchbox, when an opaque body, very large, passes before his window, and falls with a dead thump into the garden. His first impression was that it was a man, a drunkard who had fallen from an upper window. He opened his own, and looked out, but saw nothing. On his coming down rather late next morning to the *salon*, he found that neither the count nor countess had appeared. The assembled guests, who began by making jokes on their laziness, at length became seriously alarmed. The *valet de chambre* of the count had knocked several times at the door of his room without any notice being taken.

We consulted together, Madame Dowghiello (the bride's aunt), the doctor and myself. The alarm of the valet had proved catching. We all three went up with him. Before the door we found the *femme de chambre* of the young countess in a fright, vowing that some misfortune must have happened, for the window of madame was wide open. I remembered with alarm this heavy body falling before my window. We knocked loudly. No reply. At last, the valet brought a bar of iron, and we broke open the door. No! I have not the courage to describe the spectacle that met our view. The young countess was stretched dead upon the bed, the face horribly lacerated, the throat open, inundated with blood. The count had disappeared, and no one has since heard of him.

The doctor examined the horrible wound of the young woman.

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"It is not a steel blade," he exclaimed, "that has made this wound. It is a *bite*!"

It should be remembered that the charm of Mérimée's stories consists in the style, the idiomatic language, the latent humour, the playful fancy, and the fine, hardly perceptible, touches of irony interspersed. It is therefore quite impossible to do justice to them in abridgement or translation.

On the 24th October, 1860, he writes from Paris:—

I went to St. Cloud yesterday, where I dined almost tête-à-tête with the Emperor, the Empress, and "Monsieur fils," as they say at Lyon: all in excellent health, and good humour. I talked a long time with the Emperor, especially on ancient history and Cæsar. He astonishes me by the ease with which he comprehends things of erudition, for which he has recently enough contracted the taste.\*

The Empress told me some curious anecdotes of her journey to Corsica. The bishop spoke to her of a bandit named Bosio, whose story has the air of having been copied from *Colomba*. He is a thoroughly honest youth, whom the counsels of a woman have driven to commit two or three little murders. He is pursued for several months, but uselessly. Women and children suspected of carrying him food are thrown into prison, but impossible to lay hands on him. *No one knows where he is.* Her majesty, who has read the romance you wot of, felt interested in this man, and said she should be very glad if he could be induced to leave the island and go to Africa or elsewhere, where he might become a good soldier and an honest man. "Ah, Madame," said the bishop, "will you allow me to tell him this?" "How, Monseigneur, you know where he is?"

Rule general: the veriest rogue in Corsica is always related to the honestest man. What greatly surprised them is that they (the Imperial party) were asked a prodigious number of *grâces* but not a sou: so that the Empress returned full of enthusiasm.

In his charming novel, "*Colomba*," much of the plot turns on the secret understanding that is kept up between the bandits and their hereditary chief:—

The meeting at Warsaw (he continues) is a failure. The Emperor of Austria invited himself, and was received with the politeness observed towards the indiscreet. Nothing serious was done there. The pretension of the Emperor of Austria was to establish that if Austria had the incubus of Hungary, Russia had Poland, to which Gortschakoff replied: "You have eleven millions of Hungarians, and you are three millions of Germans. We are forty millions of Russians, and have no

\* "*La Vie de Jules César*" was published in 1865.

need of help to keep six millions of Poles in order." Consequently no mutual assurance.

He rarely comes in contact with a celebrity, especially an academicien, without a sneer. Writing from Cannes : —

I have been in the company and the vicinity of M. Cousin, who has come to cure himself of a complaint in the eyes, and who talks like a one-eyed magpie, eats like an ogre, and is surprised at not getting well under this beautiful sky which he sees for the first time. He is, moreover, very amusing; for he has the quality of talking his best for all the world. I believe that when he is alone with his servant he talks with him as with the most coquettish Orleanist or Legitimist duchess. The Cannites *pur sang* do not know what to make of him, and you may fancy how they look upon being told that this man who talks on every subject, and talks well on every subject, has translated Plato and is the lover of Madame de Longueville. His only defect is not knowing when to stop talking.

Almost the only man of mark who passes through the ordeal unscathed is Prince Bismarck, whom he met (October, 1865) at Biarritz : —

Another personage, M. de Bismarck, has pleased me more. He is a tall German, very polite, who is far from *naïf*. He has an air absolutely devoid of *Gemüth* but full of *esprit*. He has made a conquest of me. He has brought with him a wife with the largest feet in Germany, and a daughter who walks in the footsteps of the mother.

From Cannes, 16th December, 1867 : —

What shall I say to you of the policy of M. Olivier and *tutti quanti*. In vain do they turn their phrases very elegantly, and affirm that they are profoundly convinced. They seem to me second-rate actors, who play the first parts in a manner that can deceive nobody. We are daily growing less and less. The only real great man is M. de Bismarck.

Apropos, might it be true that he spent some of his secret service money (in Paris)? I hold the purchase of the journals to be highly probable. But, as M. de Bismarck will not send his receipts to M. de Kervegnan, I suppose these gentlemen will come off with honour.

It did not require his confirmed habit of turning the worst side outwards to discern symptoms of national degeneracy and decline in June, 1869; when he writes from Paris : —

I feel sure that we are about to have, in words and actions, enormities for which there will not be roasted apples enough. Alas! things may end in harder projectiles. What a misfortune that the modern mind is so flat (*plat*)! Do you believe that it was ever so

much so? Doubtless, there have been ages when people were more ignorant, more barbarous, more absurd; but there were here and there some great geniuses to compensate; while now-a-days, it strikes me, there is a very low level of all intellects.

November 11, 1869, from Cannes : —

I breakfasted yesterday at Nice with M. Thiers, who is greatly changed physically since the death of Madame Dosne, and not at all morally, so far as I saw. . . . In politics I found him still more changed: he has become reasonable, at seeing this immense madness that has taken possession of this country, and he is preparing to combat it, as he did in 1849. I fear he deceives himself a little as to his strength. It is much easier to burst the bags of *Æolus* than to mend them and make them air-tight.

It seems probable that we are coming to a fight: the *chassepot* is all powerful, and can give the populace of Paris an historic lesson, as General Changarnier remarked; but will it be used *à propos*? Personal government has become impossible, and parliamentary government, without good faith, without honesty, and without men of capacity, appears to me not less impossible. In a word, the future, and I might say the present, are to my thinking as gloomy as they well can be.

In January 1870 he writes from Cannes that, worse than having no appetite, he has a horror of every kind of nutriment; that he cannot read, nor at times discern what is before his eyes: "Such, dear friend, is the situation in which I find myself. I feel certain that it is a slow and very painful death which is approaching. I must make up my mind to it." His mode of life, on his return to Cannes in the following autumn with the intention of wintering there as usual, is described by M. Taine. His main, almost exclusive, object, was necessarily his health. The practice of archery had been prescribed to him as an exercise, and he was fond of sketching. Daily, therefore, when the weather permitted, he might be seen walking silently towards some pre-appointed ground, in company with two elderly Englishwomen, one of whom carried his drawing-box, and the other his bow and arrows.\* By way of varying the programme he sometimes made an expedition to a cottage, half a league off, to feed a cat, or amused himself with catch-

\* "Towards the end of his life, there were found with him two elderly English ladies to whom he spoke little, and for whom he did not appear to care much: one of my friends saw him with tears in his eyes because one of them was ill" (Taine). They were friends of his mother, who endeavoured to supply her place by looking after his domestic arrangements. She did not die till he was near fifty.

ing flies for a pet lizard. "When the railway brought him a friend, he lighted up, and his conversation became charming. But happiness was wanting; he saw the future in black, pretty nearly as we have it at this day; before closing his eyes, he had the pain of witnessing the complete downfall, and he died on the 23rd September, 1870." The last of the letters is dated the day of his death:—

Dear friend, I am very ill; so ill, that writing is a trying affair. There is a little amendment. I will write to you soon, I hope, more in detail. Send to my apartment at Paris for the "Lettres de Madame de Sévigné," and a "Shakespeare." I ought to have sent them to you before starting. *Adieu, je vous embrasse.*"

Two hours after writing these words, he was a corpse. Dying in the very crisis of a nation's destiny, he passed away unhonoured because unobserved; \* and one good at least will result from the publication of these Letters: they will lead to a retrospective review of his literary productions, and a calm estimate of their merits and demerits, which can hardly fail to be favourable to his memory upon the whole. The bare recapitulation will surprise those who have been wont to look upon him more in the light of a literary amateur, like Walpole, than a working man of letters.

Although a member of the French Bar, he never practised as an advocate, and his "Théâtre de Clara Gazul, Comédienne Espagnole," was published in 1825, when (born in Paris, September 28, 1803) he was barely twenty-two. This is a collection of dramatic pieces, purporting to be translated from the Spanish of a Spanish actress, by a Frenchman named Le-strange, who had been intimately acquainted with her and seen her in all her best parts. Both actress and translator were imaginary. To complete the deception, M. Delescluze produced a portrait (afterwards lithographed) of Clara, "from the life;" which, in one sense, it was; being, in fact, a portrait of Mérimée, with the features a little softened, in the costume of a Spanish woman. The success was so complete that a Spaniard (ashamed, probably, to confess his ignorance of so celebrated a countrywoman) on being asked his opinion of the translation, replied that although very good, it hardly did justice to the original.

\* The "Discours" of the successor to his *fautuil* in the Academy, M. Loménie, was delivered on the 8th instant, after this article was in type. Although abounding in curious and valuable matter, it is completely silent on the subject of the "Inconnue."

In "La Guzla,"\* published in 1827, a similar system of mystification is pursued. This was an alleged translation of the songs or popular poetry of an Illyrian bard, named Hyacinth Maglanowich, whose biography is given by the translator, an Italian refugee. The most learned linguists, French and German, were completely taken in; an Ossianic controversy arose as to the existence and authenticity of the alleged originals; and the first to penetrate the mystery was Goethe, who said he was put upon the right track by observing that *Guzla* is the anagram of *Gazul*. On throwing off the disguise, Mérimée writes: "What diminishes the merit of Goethe in divining the author of 'La Guzla' is, that I sent him a copy, with signature and flourish (*paraphe*), by a Russian who was passing through Weimar. He has given himself the honour of the discovery to appear more mischievous."

"La Jacquerie" appeared in 1828; "La Chronique du Règne de Charles IX." in 1829; "Notes d'un Voyage dans le Midi de la France" in 1835; "Notes d'un Voyage dans l'Ouest de la France" in 1837; "Etudes sur l'Histoire Romaine" in 1844; "Histoire de Pierre I., Roi de Castille" in 1848; "Le Faux Demetrius" in 1853. His minor works and novels are spread over the whole of his literary life, and, many having appeared piecemeal in reviews, it would be difficult to fix the precise date. His "Notes et Souvenirs sur Beyle" originally appeared as an introduction to Beyle's "Correspondance Inédite," in 1856. His historical works have never been popular, and the reason is plain. Instead of studying artistic effects, he avoided them. There is no glowing or flowing narrative, no dramatic grouping, no seasoning of romance, no suppression or exaggeration of facts, no rhetorical effusions, no undue colouring of character, nothing that will remind the reader of Thiers or Lamartine, Macaulay or Carlyle.

By dint of insisting on certainty, [says M. Taine], he dried up knowledge, and kept of the plant only the wood without the flowers. There is no other mode of accounting for the coldness of his historical essays, "Don Pedro," "The Cossacks," "The False Demetrius," "The Servile War," "The Catiline Conspiracy,"—complete, solid studies, well supported by authorities, well developed; but the personages of which are lifeless: probably be-

\* The name of an Illyrian lyre or harp.

cause he did not choose to make them live. . . . He might easily have done so: but it was contrary to his system to set them visibly before us: admitting in history only proved details, refusing to give us his own guesses for authentic facts, critical to the detriment of his work, rigorous to the point of retrenching the best part of himself, and putting an interdict on his imagination.

The facility with which he had mystified the critics had confirmed him in a mistaken estimate of art. "About the year 1827," he writes, "I was a romanticist. We told the classicists, '*Point de salut sans la couleur locale.*' We understood by *couleur locale* what in the seventeenth century was called *les mœurs*, but we were very proud of our word, and we fancied we had invented both the word and the thing. But the process was so simple, so easy, that I came to doubt of the merit of the *couleur locale* itself, and I forgave Racine for having civilized (*police*) the savage heroes of Sophocles and Euripides."

If we may trust the author, the receipt for the local colour in "La Guzla," was this: "Procure a statistical work on Illyria, with the 'Travels of the Abbé Fortis,' and learn five or six words of Slavonic." This is a palpable exaggeration as regards "Guzla," and pure affectation so far as his best works of fiction are concerned. In "Carmen," for example, of which the scene is laid in Spain, the local colour is so complete that the best scenes read like extracts from "Don Quixote" or "Gil Blas." In "Colomba," again, the Corsican manners, habits, and modes of thinking are depicted to the life. He had paid frequent visits to the countries in which his plots are laid; mixed with the people, and conversed with them in their own language, including (if necessary) their *patois*. One of the places in which he was most at home was a Spanish hostelry, with Andalusian muleteers and peasants. He spoke "Calo" with a facility that astonished the Spanish gypsies;—and Carmen was a Spanish gypsy. He must also have been perfectly at home in Russian to enable him to write "Le Faux Demetrius," in which free use is made of popular legends and traditions.

The true Demetrius was the Tsarevitch supposed to have been murdered in 1591 in his tenth or eleventh year, at the instigation of Boris, a sort of mayor of the palace, who soon afterwards usurped the imperial throne, and was firmly seated on it when, about 1603, a claimant

started up. This was a young man of twenty-two, who told a plausible story of his escape from the assassins, and produced, in default of witnesses, a seal bearing the arms and the name of the Tsarevitch, and a golden cross ornamented with precious stones, which he pretended to have received, according to usage, from his godfather, Prince Ivan Mstislowski, on the day of his baptism. He was red-haired, with blue eyes, a broad face, large nose, thick lips, and low in stature. The mother of the true Demetrius was very dark, and his father, the Tsar Fedor, tall and handsome. Yet, somehow, people managed to discover a strong resemblance to both. We give as a specimen of Mérimée's strict adherence to details, what he deems the best accredited version of the first appearance of this personage upon the stage:—

One day, at Brahin (in Lithuania), Prince Adam Wisniowiecki being in his bath, a young *valet de chambre*, who had been some time in his service, forgot to bring him something he had called for. Irritated at this want of attention, the Prince gave him a box on the ear, and called him a son of —. The young man, much moved, exclaimed, with tears in his eyes: "Ah, Prince Adam, if you knew who I am, you would not treat me in this manner. But never mind, I must endure everything, since I myself have taken the place of a domestic." "And who are you then, and where do you come from?" "I am the Tsarevitch Demetrius, son of Ivan Vassilievitch."

Then he narrated the story of his miraculous escape, and showed his baptismal cross. The Prince, at his wit's end, believed all this modest and good-looking young man told him. He began by begging pardon for the box on the ear and the injurious epithet he had applied. Then begging the youth to remain in the bathroom, the Prince hurried to his wife, and ordered her to prepare a magnificent repast; since that very evening the Tsar of Muscovy was to be their guest. While the Princess knows not what to make of this sudden journey of the Tsar, her husband orders six of his finest saddle-horses, dapple greys, to be caparisoned, and has each led by a skilful groom habited with all possible magnificence. A travelling carriage is then got ready and amply supplied with cushions and rich carpets.\* Then the Prince enters the bath-room followed by twelve servants carrying kaftans of brocade, pelisses of sable, and arms incrustated with gold. He respectfully assists his ex-valet to put on the richest dress, and places horses, carriage, &c. &c., at his disposal. "Let your Majesty deign to accept this trifle: all I have is at your service."

\* "There were then no seats in the carriages. The persons using them sat on cushions, and covered their legs with rich Persian carpets; as still or recently in Turkey."



All the ordinary forms of the Slavonic legend will be found in this recital. It forgets nothing, neither the housings of the horses, nor the colour of the stuffs, nor the price of the furs. It repeats in the Homeric manner the dialogue of its heroes. But why, under these details embellished by an Oriental imagination, might there not be a genuine historical tradition?

Introduced under such auspices, the claimant was everywhere received with acclamations; he is proclaimed Tsar; and then, to put the copestone to popular credulity, an interview is arranged for a formal recognition by the mother, whom he was to see for the first time since his resurrection:—

A rich tent had been erected near the village of Tournisk: it was there that Demetrius received the widow of Ivan: they remained in it for some instants hidden from all eyes: what they said to each other was known to none: \* then they came out of the tent and fell into each other's arms with all the marks of the most lively tenderness. At this spectacle, the acclamations of the multitude rang out on all sides: all doubt had disappeared in the general sympathy, so easy and so catching for the masses. The respect of the son, the emotion of the mother, drew tears from the assembled crowds: not a person could have been found in it who was not ready to swear that the Tsar was verily the son of the widow of Ivan. . . . She had revenues and an establishment befitting the mother of a sovereign assigned to her. He visited her daily, and always with demonstrations of the most profound respect and the most sincere affection. The incredulous were reduced to silence. Who would have dared to deny the evidence of the religious Tsarine? A few days afterwards, Demetrius was crowned with great pomp in the cathedral, and with the ceremonial already consecrated by Fedor and Boris.

The career of the false Demetrius was cut short precisely as that of the true Demetrius might have been—by assassination; and immediately a fresh one sprang up, to announce that he had never been assassinated at all. He, too, though a bad copy—with different features, coarse manners, and gross ignorance—was recognized by the flower of the Lithuanian and Polish nobility, with the identical Prince Adam, the patron of the original claimant, at their head.

To the same fastidiousness which (except, perhaps, in "The False Demetrius") led Mérimée to strip history

of everything melodramatic or meretricious, may be traced his practice of pruning and polishing his novels, especially the shorter ones, till they might be compared to rare gems in choice settings, or to cabinet pictures by Meissonnier or Gerome. Moreover, we agree, with M. Taine, that if they do not always point a moral, they are eminently suggestive, and afford ample food for speculators who like to "expatiate free o'er all this scene of Man." It is hardly going too far to say, that "the hundred pages of 'Carmen' are worth more than many dissertations on the primitive and savage instinct; that the tale of 'Arsène Guillot' contains the pith of many volumes on popular religion and on the true feelings of courtesans; that there is no severer sermon against the errors of credulity, or of the imagination, than 'La Double Méprise' and 'Le Vase Etrusque'; that the 'Partie de Trictrac' may be reperused in the year 2000 to learn what a single departure from honour may cost."

A few kind actions go far to redeem an infinity of unkind or cynical words; and not a few kind actions of Mérimée's are remembered by his friends. Those who knew him best believed him when he wrote: "It rarely happens to me to sacrifice others to myself, and when this does happen, the utmost possible remorse is the result." He gave signal proof of both courage and generosity when he came forward as the defender of Libri in 1852. In support of the theory that an affectionate disposition lay hidden under his cold, calm demeanour, they may confidently point to his thirty years' warm, unbroken, confiding attachment to his "Inconnue." All things considered, therefore, we are content to accept and conclude with M. Taine's summary of his character: "It will be found, I think, that, born with a thoroughly good heart, endowed with a superior mind, having led an honourable life, worked hard, and produced some first-rate works, he has, notwithstanding, not drawn from himself all the service he might have rendered, nor attained to all the happiness to which he might have aspired. Through fear of being a dupe, he distrusted himself in life, in love, in science, in art; and he was the dupe of his distrust. We are always the dupe of something, and perhaps it is best to resign ourselves from the first to being so."

\* She subsequently confessed that she was influenced by threats and promises to recognize the impostor.

From The Cornhill Magazine.

THE COURTIER OF MISFORTUNE: A  
BONAPARTIST STORY.

I.

CAPTAIN JEAN CŒURPREUX, of the 5th Algerian Spahis, having been sent to Paris with despatches from Marshal M'Mahon to Marshal Lebœuf, was invited to the last ball given at the Tuileries by Napoleon III.

He was a man of about thirty, with a complexion the colour of leather, clipped hair that stood on end like bristles, and a full brown beard. His uniform was a light-blue loose-fitting jacket called a *dolman*, braided across the front with black silk frogs, and embroidered on the cuffs to within an inch of the shoulders with gold lace of three rows interwoven. His baggy trowsers were scarlet; and he held in his hand a red kepi with the three rows of gold braid which marked his grade, the Spahis having no other head-dress than a kepi even for gala occasions. On Cœurpreux's breast glittered the ribbon and cross of the Legion of Honour, the yellow ribbon and pendant of the *médaille militaire*, which proved he had risen from the ranks, and the three campaigning medals of the Italian, Cochinchina, and Mexican expeditions. Below these hung the white and blue ribbon and silver cross of Pius IX. and the medal of Mentana; also three other medals, two of silver and one of gold, attached to tricoloured ribbons, and showing that the Captain had three times in the course of his career saved human lives. His muscular frame and smileless mien, the large size of the white gloves he wore, and the beard, which is the distinctive token of African service, all helped to mark a man who was no carpet soldier; and he looked embarrassed enough in the palace saloons, where he appeared to know not a soul, and where flitted before him, alert as dragon-flies, all the dandy officers of the crack corps—the Cent-Gardes in their azure tunics and gold aiglets, the Lancers of the Guard in Austrian white, the Guides in emerald and gold, the Artillery of the Guard, the colour of whose uniforms was invisible for the mass of braiding that adorned them, and the whole host of State dignitaries, from diplomatists and senators in blue and gilding to the prefects and deputies in black and silver. Pushed into a corner by this glittering throng, fearful of treading on the skirts of the ladies who streamed by him in a sea of silk and diamonds that

made his head whirl, the Captain would evidently have felt much more at home in his saddle, hunting rebel Arabs, than in this place, to which the War Minister had procured him an invitation as a conspicuous, though well-deserved, honour.\*

Yet leaning in a corner of the noble Salle des Maréchaux, where he had been hemmed in, the Captain cast his serious blue eyes about him as if he were in search of somebody. Twelve years before this ball, and when he was but a quick-hearted boy of eighteen, he had fallen in love with a girl as beautiful as sunlight and a year less than his own age. He was thought too young to marry then; besides which, though a gentleman, he had no money to expect; so the girl's parents and his own had cut the courtship short, and told him to dismiss all ideas of it and forever. He protested at first, but finding resistance vain, had enlisted to try and banish a passion which could lead to nothing. Soon after, he heard that Mdlle. Violette Desprès, the young lady in question, had been married to a sub-prefect, who subsequently became a full prefect—one M. de Cri, twenty years older than herself, an active placeman and a loyal. Cœurpreux had never seen her since, for most of his time had been spent in warfare; and when he

\* The *Spahis* are the native cavalry of Algeria, as the *Turcos* are the native infantry; both are mainly officered by Frenchmen; natives being restricted from rising above the rank of lieutenant. The *dolman* is the summer-jacket as distinguished from the *pelisse*, which is worn in winter, and has Astrakan fur round the collar and cuffs. Some of the Spahi regiments used to wear scarlet jackets and light blue trowsers and caps, but this has been recently altered, and the whole of the French light cavalry now wear the light blue jacket and scarlet trowsers. The yellow-ribboned *médaille militaire* was instituted by Napoleon III. as a minor decoration to the Legion of Honour. It is conferred on privates and non-commissioned officers as a first step towards the other order, and carries with it a pension of *s.* a year, just as the lowest grade in the Legion of Honour carries (in the army, not for civilians) *10*l. The *médaille militaire* is sometimes conferred on field-marshal and generals when they have attained to the highest rank, that of Grand Croix, in the Legion of Honour; but in this case it is a manner of proclaiming that their cup of military distinction is full to the brim, and that the State can do nothing more for them. General de Cissey, War Minister under M. Thiers, was presented with the military medal by Marshal M'Mahon, when the latter became President. The medals with tricoloured ribbons are called *médailles de sauvetage*, and are bestowed for acts of bravery in saving life. The first two are of silver; if a third be won, it is of gold. There are five grades in the Legion of Honour. When in mufti, the chevaliers (companions as we should call them) wear a slip or small bow of red ribbon in their button-holes; and the members of the four superior degrees—officers, commanders, grand officers, and grand-crosses—rosettes. In evening dress or uniform the commanders wear collar-ribbons; the grand officers and grand-crosses broad ribbons under the waistcoat and just peeping over the edge of it, not across the waistcoat, as knights in England. The grand-crosses also wear a star on the breast and a jewel-cross pendant.



came to France on furlough, it was only for a few occasional weeks, which he dutifully devoted to his family. But now, having no one to speak to him, he glanced at every face that passed, half-dreading, yet moved by a curious anxiety, to see the woman whom he had never forgotten nor could forget; the loves of some soldiers being strangely deep and constant. It had reached him that day that M. de Cri was in Paris, angling for promotion after his wont, and he thought it probable that his wife might be at this court ball. Had a surgeon laid his stethoscope on Captain Cœurpreux's heart, he would have heard it beat like a boy's. So much for the man who had stared death a hundred times out of countenance, and was called the lion of his regiment!

The rooms continued to fill. Officers and dignitaries poured in faster and faster; the press of ladies became a crush; and presently, the Empress, seated under a canopy at the further end of the room, observed this officer standing by himself, so grave and unnoticed. No sovereign ever better discharged her duties of hostess than this august lady, as gentle as she was amiable, as queenly as she was fair; so she turned to the Emperor, and inquired who was yonder Spahi, so medalled and decorated. Napoleon, perhaps dreaming of the recent plebiscite, about which he had just been conversing with M. Emile Ollivier, sedate in his sheen spectacles and black whiskers, referred the question to the Duke de Bassano, the Grand Chamberlain, who, of course, knowing nothing of the matter, asked Marshal Leboeuf, then standing by his side. The War Minister came forward, and in that well-modulated voice which made him the first of courtier soldiers, summed up the Captain's history in twenty words. Wounded in Italy, wounded in Mexico, Cœurpreux had conquered every step in his rise at the sword's point. His last achievement was the capture of two Arab chiefs and three villages with a troop of fifty horse—that is at odds of something like ten to one. The Governor General of Algeria had sent him to Paris, that he might himself bear the tidings of the action in which he was the hero, “and with your Majesty's leave,” added the Marshal, “I intended submitting Captain Cœurpreux's name for promotion to the rank of *chef d'escadron*, and for advancement in the Legion of Honour.” The Emperor thanked him, and the Marshal retreated.

Thereon the observant Duke de Bas-

sano whispered to Viscount Laferrière; and this courtly Vice-Chamberlain, having a key embroidered on his coat, glided through the crowds with the expertness of a well-bred eel, and, smiling as he bowed, asked Captain Cœurpreux whether he should find him a partner. The Captain would much rather not have danced, for he had grown rusty in this science, and the offer made him redder. But he regarded a vice-chamberlain somewhat as a superior officer, and further reflected that if people were invited to balls, it was presumably to the end that they might disport themselves. Accordingly he drew up his collar, cleared his throat, and followed M. de Laferrière with an erect stride, as if he were being told off for outpost duty. The Viscount did not take him far. He hesitated a single moment which side he should turn, then made straight for a lady dressed in lilac silk and surrounded by a circle of admirers two deep. She seemed used to be worshipped, and, flirting her fan, warded off with short laughs, glances, and tosses of her pretty head, the ready compliments of her bevy, composed of attachés, subalterns of the Guard, and budding Councillors of State. But at sight of the bronzed soldier this young troop fell back, and M. de Laferrière, always smiling, said:—

“Madame, allow me to introduce to you an officer who respectfully begs the honour of your acquaintance: M<sup>me</sup>. de Cri, Captain Cœurpreux.”

It was singular that the chamberlain should have led him direct like that to the woman whom his own keen eyes had been unable to discern—the woman whose image had shone upon him from many a beacon-fire, lit up many a cloudy night, nerved him to more brave deeds than might ever have been reckoned to his glory had he not been animated during every day and hour of twelve long years with the thoughts of his first and only love. But perhaps the image he had enshrined in his heart was that of the young girl as he had first known her, with her virginal face and simple attire, and it was this that had prevented him from recognizing her as she was then—not less fair, but of completer beauty. At all events, the recognition was prompt enough now; and there was not a lineament in those features, so often seen in dreams, awake or sleeping, but seemed to him embellished by time. He faltered out a request for the next waltz, in a thick voice that struggled vainly to be distinct,

and he found himself trembling as he had never done in danger or trouble since the day they had last parted.

Madame de Cri blushed, though very slightly, and remarked that it was a long time since they had met. But this was all, for Strauss's band suddenly struck up Metra's *Valse des Roses*, that delicious melody which may be said to have lulled the second Empire to its death; and M<sup>me</sup>. de Cri, forgetting or unheeding a promise made to another partner, stood up with Cœurpreux. He encircled her waist with his arm, she rested one of her small hands on his shoulder, casting a wondering look the while at the rows of medals on his breast, and they whirled together into the maze. But why should the bravest of men have been so poor a dancer? There is not much waltzing in Algeria, nor, had there been, was Cœurpreux the man to care for it. He had held his own once in ball-rooms along with the best; but this was when Violette Desprès used to be his partner, and he had had none since. His arm tightened round her lithe form; he felt her soft breath on his face, and his honest brain spun round like a wheel. The polished habitués of the Tuileries, accustomed to gyrate gracefully on a few yards of space, had never seen a man spin about in this fashion, and several couples skipped out of his way with alacrity. It was the best thing they could do, for the Captain crashed through the rest as if they were paper hoops, though he took care somehow that his own shoulders should be the rams and that his partner should turn unharmed. Characteristically he had omitted to take off his sword, and ignored the drawing-room art of balancing himself in such wise that it should hang perpendicular. It was no toy either, this weapon, but a huge cavalry sabre, which knew the taste of blood, and clanked noisily as if excited, sweeping round at right angles with its owner, entangling itself in *crêpe de Chine* skirts, and ripping therein gaps a foot wide. Desolate wails sprang up on the headlong Spahi's path, and M<sup>me</sup>. de Cri felt that he had lost all control over his pace. "I—I think we had better stop," she murmured, growing afraid. But Cœurpreux could not have halted had he wished it. He had scattered most of the other dancers as effectually as a runaway charger might a flock of sheep; and he only kept his balance by the force of motion as a teetotum does. Unluckily, too, there was one waltzer who had not

noticed him. A Carabinier captain, six feet high and a centaur in breadth of limb, came revolving in an opposite direction. "Take care!" cried the Carabinier's partner—a countess, frail as a feather, who perceived the danger; but Cœurpreux was already upon them. He bumped like a shell full upon the Carabinier, and the two couples reeled asunder from the shock. The Carabinier righted himself instantly, being adept; but Cœurpreux had only just time to disengage himself from his partner, so as not to involve her in his fall, and floundered heavily to the ground, making an unholy clatter with his scabbard, and imprinting his two spurs into the slippery flooring clean as gimlets.

Despite the Imperial presence, a titter broke out amid the muttered imprecations of those who had had their toes trodden on, and the Captain bade fair to be branded to all time as the lout who had made such a figure of himself at the Tuileries. But quick as kindness, a hand was extended to the fallen man, who grasped it not knowing whose it was, scrambled to his feet by its means, and stood crest-fallen and giddy before the Emperor. It was at the Emperor's feet he had rolled; it was the Emperor who raised him.

"Commandant," said Napoleon, in the tones which those who once heard him speak, could never remember without emotion, "this is the second time I have seen you fall—the first was by my side on the field of Magenta." Then turning to Madame de Cri, while the laughers around lapsed silent and converged their gaze with surprise on the quivering soldier: "Madame, a man may be pardoned for missing his footing in a ball-room, who has kept it so often and so well in posts of danger. But Commandant Cœurpreux will owe you a *revanche*, and as he belongs from this day to my regiment of Guides, he will have many opportunities of proving to you in this very room that a gallant heart can always retrieve ill-fortune."

A general picked up and restored to the new Commandant\* a medal of his that he had dropped; and Cœurpreux bent low without a word before his Sovereign. What indeed could he have said? To save a man from ridicule and exalt

\* Commandant is the colloquial appellation of French brigade-majors, whose title is *chefs d'escadron*, or *chefs de bataillon*, according as they are in the cavalry or infantry. Major is in France an administrative and dépôt title. The French major keeps the regimental records and does some of the work of English quartermasters. He does not command in the field.

him to be the admiration of a thousand people who were disposed to laugh him to scorn, is not a service to be repaid by words; and Cœurpreux felt simply too much moved to speak. The crowds parted in two respectful lanes to right and left of him, as he gave his arm to Madame de Cri and flattering murmurs buzzed their music in his ears, making his progress a triumphal march. The ladies forgave him for their torn skirts, and eyed him with complacency; the men bore no rancour for their grazed elbows or bruised feet; and the Carabinier captain, who had been inclined to resent his clumsiness with a scowl, offered him a smirking apology, now that Cœurpreux was promoted over his head and was a man to be courted among men. And Madame de Cri, what did she say or do? As her partner conducted her to her place, he was aware of an arm trembling upon his; and when she was seated and he ventured a few words, not very firm or coherent, in apology for his mishap, it did not escape him that her agitation exceeded his own. It is perhaps not a bad world where the trials of twelve years can be effaced by a moment's joy: for Cœurpreux felt he would have suffered twelve years more to be repaid at the end with another such glance as Violette cast upon him when she muttered: "I had not heard of your dangers and triumphs; I hope you will come and tell me about them yourself."

"Yes, we most sincerely hope Commandant Cœurpreux will do us the pleasure to call," intervened a personage who hurried up, looking like a yellow grasshopper. He had not much hair, but a riband round his neck, and an open mouth that seemed to dribble words as if it had a leak in it. "We shall always be delighted to see you, Commandant. We are staying at the Grand Hôtel pending my transfer to a livelier prefecture, I trust, than that which I now hold. But I am come with orders from her Majesty. The Empress desires that you shall be a guest at her supper-table, in order that she may pin the officer cross of our Order to your coat with her own hand."

The glow had faded from Violette's cheek and she had turned slightly pale at the arrival of this intruder.

"Commandant," she said in an abashed voice, "my husband—M. de Cri."

## II.

M. DE CRI belonged to a family who had housed and fed themselves out of

the public taxes ever since the great Revolution, and perhaps before it, which proves once again that revolutions and reforms are synonymous. Whatever befall kings, the family of De Cri remained where they were, and they were always in first-rate places; so that now and then, when a Frenchman who had helped to overturn a throne came to a public office and found a De Cri there as if nothing had happened, he was inclined to marvel whether his revolution had been of much use, which marvel was well grounded. The Cris were of course cousins by marriage and sworn brothers in all else to the great house of Jobus, who also clung to their posts through all wind and weather. If it had been computed what sums in gold these two valuable tribes had sucked out of the Treasury since they had first put their lips to the national udder, one would have reached a total which could have amply sufficed to gild every house-top, window-sill, and rain-pipe in France, to say nothing of all the mile-stones from Havre to Marseilles; and if it had been reckoned what they had done for their country in return for these payments, a mass of written paper might have been accumulated sufficient to light the kitchen-fires of Europe for a score of years and the cigars of Christendom to all eternity. As it was, the buttermen, tobacconists, and grocers of France wrapped all their wares in printed forms filled up by members of the Cri and Jobus connections, so that it cannot be contended these families were either useless or unprofitable in their generation. They fared plenteously, and, when their individual constitutions would admit of it, were sleek. It did not do to offend them, for they were naturally convinced that all things in France were theirs, and they could make their displeasure felt as effectively as a swarm of drones can. As there was not a coat upon a Cri or Jobus' back but had been paid for by the public, they missed no occasion of declaring how greatly the public were beholden to them. And it is fair to add that if the public occasionally evinced a different opinion, there was no want of moralists who asserted that we live in a thankless age.\*

M. Nepos Lémargeux Desfonds de Cri, Violette Desprès' husband, had been allotted his share in the budget at an early age. His father holding a post of emolu-

\* For additional particulars as to the Jobus influence, see *Le Ministre malgré lui*, CORNHILL MAGAZINE, April, 1872.

ment, it had been frankly conceded that his son was entitled to do the same, and, further, that this post ought to be a lucrative one, for, as we all know, the great Revolution abolished hereditary privileges. So young De Cri got a sub-prefecture, just as his father before him had obtained one because his father had enjoyed such a sinecure when sub-prefectures were first invented. Young De Cri was not pleased with his first appointment, because there was not enough pay to it, and, as a general rule, M. de Cri never was pleased, nor, at heart, were the different Ministers who promoted him, for there was not one of them but felt that, if half the Mint should be poured into M. de Cri's cash-bag, such a reward would not be in excess of that faithful servant's deserts. Whenever a Home Minister came to grief, one of the first trains following the catastrophe brought M. de Cri into Paris; and another train soon after bore him out of the capital, with a patent of promotion signed and sealed in his coat-pocket. He visited the metropolis as ordinary folk do a kitchen-garden—to pick fruit there; and, in the course of his official changes, had been moved about the land like a chessman, displacing in his onward march many a humble pawn, who, being either inoffensive, or hard-working, or content with his lot, was naturally deprived of his emoluments on the first convenient opportunity. M. de Cri was honoured with the esteem and confidence of all out of whom he had ever cozened favour, from the Emperor in person down to the lowest clerk in the Home Office, presumably some relative of his own. M. Rouher knew him, so did M. de Persigny; M. de Lavalette accounted him a blameless functionary, and M. Chevandier de Valdrôme was full of his praises. If M. Conti, his Majesty's Secretary, had been asked to mention an indispensable official, he would have named M. de Cri; and if M. Emile Ollivier had been sounded as to who was the fitting man to be entrusted with a post involving a substantial receipt of public monies, he would have pronounced M. de Cri to be that fitting man beyond all doubt. Nor was the reason of this far to seek, for M. de Cri had followed throughout his life a rule which cannot be too universally commended:—he had never left to another the task of blowing his own trumpet. His own trumpet was an instrument he carried about with him, always ready for use, and he never al-

lowed it to grow rusty. If men would but bugle their merits as M. de Cri did, pitching his notes now loud, now with soft melodiousness, according to the mood of his listener, this earth would offer a concert of sweet sounds, to make the very angels hang their heads.

Now a fortnight or so after the ball at the Tuileries, M. de Cri returned to his lodgings at the Grand Hôtel, elate at having obtained his promotion from a second to a first class prefectship, but pensive in another respect—which other respect was Commandant Cœurpreux. The fact is, when a man like Cœurpreux, having neither kith nor kin in a Government office, or indeed anything at all to recommend him, save his own bravery, is suddenly raised to a brilliant post by an act of sovereign prerogative, he upsets a whole series of thoughtful plans, devised for the good of the world by the real masters of the State, who are the Government underlings, and he jostles out of the way Jobuses, Cris, and their hangers-on without number. It is true that by popular fiction an Emperor is supposed to rule and dispense honours; but this is purely a fiction, for it is the Cris and Jobuses who rule; it is they who dispense honours, and they render unto each man according to his deserts, after laws of their own as immutable as those that went to work on Daniel. Thus, for a man like Cœurpreux, there is no stint of dignities, but they must be of the proper sort that fit him. Let him be advanced, by all means, and sent into marching regiments to fight Arabs, and, if heaven so wills it, be knocked on the head. But the leading commands in crack regiments like the Guides, and, indeed, all snug military, as all civil berths generally, where there is no work to be done and plenty of plums to be gathered, these are the rightful appendages of the Cris and Jobuses, and ought on no account to be interfered with. Captain de Cri-Hurlant had been confidently awaiting the commandantship which Cœurpreux had got, a Lieutenant Jobus had been expecting Cri-Hurlant's vacancy, and a Sub-Lieutenant Jobus-Cri had made perfectly sure of stepping into the shoes which Lieutenant Jobus abandoned. These were combinations which ought not to have been roughly set aside, the less so, as this new commandant was not one of your decent speakers, who keep a civil tongue between their teeth, and have the grace to attribute to the Jobuses and Cris what-



ever good-luck may befall them with or without the assistance of these worthies. He was a grumbler, after the manner of the Algerian officers, whose allowance is that which the monkey got. He thought there were abuses at the War Office, and used to say so in Africa; he would probably discover there were abuses in the Guides, and bawl the fact in the Emperor's hearing. This was altogether undesirable—in fact, quite obnoxious to contemplate, and when M. Nepos Lémargeux Desfonds de Cri went to get his letter of appointment at the Home Office, he was told by his relatives there how greatly agitated and ruffled were the feelings of the War-Office Jobuses and Cris. They had deferred making out Cœurpreux's commission, in the hope that his Majesty might reconsider his promise, and post the Commandant to active service again; and to this end they had spared no pains to impress upon his Majesty that Cœurpreux was a disaffected sort of subject, a reformer, a man who disapproved of guard regiments, and who had even at sundry times expressed himself in no becoming terms of the Imperial dynasty. Unfortunately, Napoleon had a weakness for keeping the promises he made; and as the Jobuses and Cris were aware (they are somehow aware of everything) that Mdme de Cri, née Desprès, had been formerly acquainted with Cœurpreux, they besought Prefect de Cri that Madame might use her influence on the Commandant, so that he might voluntarily forego his squadron in the Guides, and petition of his own accord to be sent warring again. In this case there would be a commandantship in Cochinchina that would suit him admirably. The Cochinchinese were not yet subdued, and if Cœurpreux survived marsh fevers, dysentery, and poisoned arrows, he might get his colonelcy almost as soon as by staying in Europe.

So when M. de Cri entered his drawing-room, which was a smart one on the first floor, looking out on to the Place de l'Opéra, he said to his wife, who had been dividing her forenoon equally between a novel of M. Arsène Houssaye and a fashion-book from Worth's:—

"My dear, has that Commandant Cœurpreux called since the other night?"

"Yes, twice;" and Violette bent over one of Mr. Worth's notions of a plain morning dress—fifty guineas without the trimming.

"Were you alone with him?"

Violette cast a terrified look at her

husband, and slightly blanched—"No; there were several visitors on both occasions."

M. de Cri seemed disappointed, and took up his position next the mantelshelf, with his coat-tails lifted under his arms, and his hands in his trowsers' pockets—a graceful and well-known attitude.

"My dear, I have the utmost confidence in your diplomatic powers, and I want you to try them on this kind of petted savage, who I believe was attached to you in bygone times. In a moment of heedless generosity, the Emperor conferred on him a post far too good for such a man as he. It leads to equerryships and all sorts of things. We must get him to drop it." And M. de Cri explained to his wife the little machination on which all the Jobuses and Cris had set their patriotic wits and their hopes.

Violette listened in silence at first, whilst she was recovering from the start which her husband's question had caused her; but when she perceived the drift of M. de Cri's request, an indignant flush mounted to her face. She was a frivolous lady, as a woman cannot well help being who is mated to a gentleman like M. de Cri. Her married life had been made up of dressing and amusement, chastened by a little fashionable devotion in Passion Week, and what hours she could spare between the calls of society and those of her toilet-table she mostly passed in blushing over the novels of M. Houssaye, or in shedding a few refreshing tears over those of M. Octave Feuillet. But at sight of Jean Cœurpreux's honest features, she had felt all that was good in her young life revive, as flowers shrunk by rain may do at the first return of sun-warmth. He had breathed to her not a word that her husband might not have heard; but who is the woman that needs to be told of what is in a man's heart? Since she had seen Cœurpreux come back to her after twelve years' absence, with the unalterable look he had worn in bidding her good-by, she had thought of him alone, more perhaps than was quite safe.

"Do you mean to say," she exclaimed slowly, but with a hot flush, "that you wish M. Cœurpreux to renounce his post, in order that the Emperor may suspect him of ingratitude, and let him be sent out of France again?"

"Yes; that is exactly it," answered M. de Cri briskly, and quite unobservant of the flush. "If this Spahi seems to make

light of his appointment to the Guides, the Emperor will think the man has some crotchet about household brigades, and offer no impediment to his being posted elsewhere. Then Cri-Hurlant will get the squadron."

"I never heard such an odious thing in my life," ejaculated Violette, almost crying from humiliation. "Why, M. Cœurpreux is the soul of courage and loyalty, and you wish to damage him in favour of a man who has never done anything but lead quadrilles at court balls—a puppy whom I can never look at with common patience."

M. de Cri opened his mouth, and stared with a panic of astonishment.

"You appear to forget Cri-Hurlant is my cousin!"

"And what of that?" retorted Violette, flashing scorn from her eyes; "he is not worthy to be the groom of the man to whom you grudge this poor little piece of Imperial bounty, because he appears to be friendless! Oh, it is cruel and shameful, and I should esteem myself the lowest of women if I were to do what you have asked me."

M. de Cri's physiognomy changed to an ashen colour that was by no means picturesque. He let fall his coat-tails, drew his hands from his pockets, and rubbed his fingers together quietly.

"I beg to observe that I was this morning appointed Prefect of the Haute-Seine, and there is no reason whatever, why, if I play my cards well, I should not soon be in the Senate, and perhaps the Cabinet. My relations have always been kind to me, and I am bound to stand by them, especially as in this instance Cri-Hurlant is only waiting for his squadron in the Guides to make a rich marriage. Besides" (and here M. de Cri drew himself up with a pomposity that was pretty droll) "I believe this man Cœurpreux would be dangerous to the Emperor's service. He is an innovator, perhaps a republican in disguise. He carps at the Government—such persons have been known to desert to the rabble in times of rebellion."

"Ah! this is too much!" cried Violette, trembling from head to foot, and with one of those stinging laughs with which women can goad a husband to fury. "Why, I have been informed you were a republican yourself when you wished to retain a post under the republic, and a royalist when you were first made a sub-prefect by Louis-Philippe."

M. de Cri broke out with something

very like an oath, and turned a flaming visage upon his wife.

"I am not here to be taunted by you as to any passage in my life, nor to hear your judgment on it. You will do as I tell you, or else," added he with significant emphasis, "I shall conclude you have reasons for shielding this soldier which no honest woman would care to avow."

What answer M. de Cri might have received to this unmanly thrust, there is no saying, but perhaps it was well for him that at this juncture a waiter knocked at the door and came in announcing, "Commandant Cœurpreux."

The prefect's countenance underwent a rapid transformation, and he rushed forward to receive his visitor with his usual gush of affability and garrulousness. "How do you do, my dear Commandant? delighted to see you! What a difference you must find between our climate and the delicious summers of Africa! I declare it looks as if it were going to rain again. But I am afraid I must leave you, having an appointment at the Home Office. M<sup>de</sup> de Masseline is going to call for M<sup>de</sup> de Cri by-and-by, to take her to the Picture Exhibition, and I daresay you will fill my place, and act as their cavalier. The ladies could not be in better hands." He wrung Cœurpreux's fingers with most affectionate cordiality, sketched a smile to his wife, and was gone. Cœurpreux and Violette were alone.

The Commandant was changed in appearance since the ball. He shone in civilian's dress and had shaved off his beard, wearing now only the waxed moustache and *impériale* of the Guard. In his button-hole was a rosette instead of a plain ribbon, and, though it would have been impossible not to recognize him for a soldier by his drilled gait and the military cut of his clothes, he was got up with that careful neatness and good taste which marks a French gentleman of the best school.

He took a seat beside the sofa on which Violette sat, and noticed that she was nearly overcome with emotion. A burning flush overspread her features, and her manners were almost hysterical.

"Tell me, Commandant," she said, beginning the conversation feverishly, "are you gazetted yet?"

"No, I am still waiting."

"And why, since the Emperor promised you your appointment before the whole court?"



Cœurpreux smiled gently and gave a true French shrug.

"The Emperor reigns, but does not rule. There are formalities to be accomplished, papers to be signed, and I believe there are moments when a signature costs a War-Office clerk as much as if it were wrung from him with a thumb-screw. I am not a favourite with those gentlemen; and if they could find some impediment to my getting on in the world, they would sleep a happy night all round."

Violette put her lace handkerchief to her mouth and bit it distractedly in a torment of hesitation.

"Do not be offended at what I am going to ask you," she faltered. "Is it true that you are a republican?"

The officer recoiled and turned red as if he had been accused of a dishonourable action.

"Since I enlisted to drive away a sorrow which I then thought curable," he said, in a grave tone of pain, "I have had one benefactor, whose name has been connected with every rise that has made me what I am. When my first epaulette was given me, it was in the Emperor's name; when I received the cross of honour for services far too slight to deserve such a dignity, I was told that the Emperor had with his own hand written my nomination on the margin of the despatch in which my unworthy claims were submitted to him. The other night, when my awkwardness was nearly covering me with well-merited ridicule, you saw how he saved me, and you heard what he said. It would be trivial to declare I would die for the Emperor—that is no more than my duty; but if by going barefooted and hungry I could save him a pang, if by sacrificing all I have now and all my prospects to come, I could relieve him from an annoyance, however slight, I would do it and deem myself happy at being able to acknowledge a debt which is more than I can ever pay."

Violette was crying.

"Then you have enemies," she sobbed—"false and heartless enemies, who are maligning you." She gave way during a few minutes to a paroxysm of grief, which shook her whole frame, and which she was utterly unable to repress. Cœurpreux sat by, pale and silent, whilst beads of perspiration pealed on his forehead, and his eyes fastened, with an expression of anxiety impossible to render, on the woman who was all in all to him, and whose uncontrollable anguish was occasioned solely by fears for his sake. He

rose noiselessly, sank on one knee, and drew one of her hands within his.

"Violette, thank you for these tears," he murmured, with deep feeling. "Do you not think I bless my enemies with all my might for this unexpected happiness they have given me?"

Violette disengaged her hand from his, and struggled pitifully with herself for a moment.

"You must go, Jean," she wailed in alarm, and shutting out the sight of him with her hands. "I thought you would forget me—and oh! if I could have foreseen this day! but it is too late—misfortune hangs over us, and you must go away. Do not face the malice of these men; they would find means to break your heart, for I know of what things they are capable; and besides, if you remained near the court, we might see each other, and this cannot—this must not be. No, you must go away far—not abroad, where you would be in battles and danger again; but there must be regiments in France, to which you might be sent without exciting any one's jealousy. But you must leave me, for you see I am weak, and . . ." Sobs choked her utterance again, and she averted her head from him, burying it on a pillow and convulsed in her agony.

"I ask you so little, Violette, and to see you occasionally would be such a gladness," muttered Cœurpreux, in a broken voice, standing over her.

"No, no!" and here she rose with an effort, clasped her hands, and with streaming eyes implored him: "Save me from myself, Jean, I entreat you—on your honour."

"Good-by, then," he faltered with a great throb at his heart, and he drew her to him rapidly, kissed her and fled.

But he did not go to the War Office to renounce his commission to the 2nd Guides, for that afternoon it was too late, and by the time he went next day some kind friends had saved him all trouble on that head. The court were at St. Cloud, and in the evening one of those beings whose privilege it is to come quite near to the ear of royalty—and what a noble use they make of that privilege!—remarked that his Majesty was never tired of combating his detractors with good gifts. Napoleon inquired what detractors; and the Empress, who was examining with Princess Metternich an album of which the Prince Imperial turned the leaves, raised her soft eyes anxiously, wondering, maybe, when the tongues of

detractors would tire. The Being then explained that M. de Cœurpreux, who would soon have the honour of commanding three troops of their Majesties' bodyguards, was a curious sort of man, most brave, and all that, but wrong-headed, a *grognaard* of the politico-military species — rather perilous, and with acid enough in him to turn the whole 2nd Regiment of Guides sour. For instance, whilst quartered at Constantine two years ago, he used to take in the *Lanterne*, and read it aloud after dinner to his brother officers, dilating much as he went on the humour of M. Rochefort; whereat Napoleon frowned, for M. Rochefort was just then cooling his humour in prison, and was no very welcome topic at court evenings. The Being proceeded to state that the projected appointment of M. de Cœurpreux had excited great admiration on all sides, as illustrating once again the inexhaustible benevolence of his Majesty, but that, singularly enough, the Commandant himself was the only man who seemed nowise enchanted by it. He had a mean opinion of Guard regiments, laughed at them, and thought the Spahis much better. He had said, sneering, that with a troop of mounted negroes he would put the entire Cavalry of the Guard to flight, and dispose of the Infantry afterwards. There was no question, however, that he was brave to rashness, that is, to a fault.

Now a sovereign may well like to reward valour, and yet be excused for not desiring to have about him a man who would turn his pet regiment sour: so the Emperor said calmly —

"I thought to do Commandant Cœurpreux a kindness by putting him in the Guides; but if he prefer some other corps, let him have his way." And at this the Empress, who had lost interest in the album, heaved a little sigh of relief, as though to say, "Only fancy, if this wrong-headed Commandant had come and arrested us all at early morning, like the officer on guard did poor Prince Couza at Bucharest!" or as a lady of humble sphere might have expressed it, "What an escape we have had of all being murdered in our beds!"

However, the Emperor, who perhaps recalled Cœurpreux's manly face, and the warm things that had been written of him by Marshal M'Mahon, expressed the wish that the Commandant should be well provided for, and took the same occasion to ask who would get this post in the Guides which M. Cœurpreux disdained? The Being deferentially sub-

mitted that Captain de Cri-Hurlant was a chivalrous warrior, and deeply devoted to their Imperial Majesties, and he indicated by a glance the warrior in question, who was courageously revolving a stereoscope for the two Mesdemoiselles d'Albe, the Empress's graceful nieces. The Emperor said nothing, but before another day had passed there was balm for the whole tribe of the Jobuses and the Cris: Captain de Cri-Hurlant had the squadron, Lieutenant Jobus got the captaincy, Sub-Lieutenant Jobus-Cri walked into the Lieutenantship, and a Jobus-Hurlant, just out of St. Cyr, gained possession of the cornetcy — whereupon the world set to going round again, as if it had not been temporarily, and most infelicitously, put out of course.

As for Cœurpreux, he presented himself at the War Office in uniform on the day following his visit to Violette, and after waiting no more than an hour and a quarter in an ante-room, was admitted to the presence of a Jobus clerk, permanent, of course, and irresponsible. There he learned all that was good for him to know, namely, that he was not to have the commission he had been promised; but the Jobus clerk added blandly, that he would get something else some day or other, when his Excellency the Minister should have time to think about him. This high and mighty clerk, who may have stood five feet three allowing his boots to count, was condescending enough to patronize such poor folk as this Cœurpreux, who had done nothing but help win half-a-hundred battles or so, and he loftily waved his paw to him in token that he might depart.

But Cœurpreux, who had come to forego the Imperial favour *motu proprio*, felt not a little hurt that it should be withdrawn from him in this unceremonious style, and so exclaimed dryly enough:

"I should like to know whether the Emperor gave you orders to break his word for him in that fashion. However, I don't lay on the Emperor's shoulders the dirty tricks that are done in his name, for if I did, there might come from this office alone mud enough to choke the Seine up."

"Sir!" gasped the little Jobus-clerk, rising to his full height and frowning at his insulter with all the dignity of a flea on a perch browbeating a lion with muzzle on — "Sir!" but he could find nothing else to say, for Cœurpreux eyed him coolly, and as duelling is not extinct in France, the small Jobus doubtless re-

flected that if he were tweaked by the nose, he might get run through next day-break into the bargain. Yet it was very monstrous to this clerk that a miserable officer should dare to bandy words with him thus shamelessly.

"I was going to say," continued Cœurpreux, drawing a large envelope from the breast of his jacket, "that I intended declining the honour which his Majesty wished to bestow, and here is a letter which I had written to beg the Emperor to employ me on active service again. I have got my promotion, for his Majesty called me Commandant, and not all the clerks in Paris can take that from me, or shall. But I only ask to go back to my regiment, even if I take simple brevet rank of commandant, and I daresay you gentlemen will not object to that much. Please see that my letter reaches the Emperor, or else there'll be a row. Good-morning."

The Jobus-clerk grumbled something and thanked heaven he was well rid of such a brute. Cœurpreux went and lunched at the general rendezvous of officers, the Café du Helder on the Boulevard des Italiens, and as, by sitting at one of the tables outside, he could descry the Grand Hôtel some hundred yards to the left, he did so when his frugal lunch was over, and remained smoking all the afternoon, watching if haply Violette might pass by in her barouche and afford him one passing glimpse of her. But she did not pass, either that day or the next, or on any of the twenty days more during which the War-Office clerks kept Cœurpreux rapping his heels on the asphalté of Paris. Cœurpreux chafed and growled and vented his fury in much imprudent talk among brother officers at the Helder, vowing that the administration of the army had grown rotten up to the hilt, as France would find if she ever ran tilt against a less Jobus-ridden Power. As armies are never quite devoid of high-souled officers anxious to curry favour with the Jobus-clerks, these sayings were faithfully reported to the War Office, and did Cœurpreux all the good one may imagine. It became an urgent question of consigning him to Cochín-China without delay, of treating him to the governorship of that delightful settlement of convicts and *vomito negro*, Cayenne, "where," remarked the clerks humorously, "he would find himself in congenial company." But Violette, who watched over Cœurpreux in secret, frustrated these designs, and accosted Marshal Le-

bœuf, at a party one night, with a tale so worded as to touch him. Marshal Le-bœuf, who has borne and will bear to all time the burden of the sins which his underlings committed—and of which they of course promptly washed their hands—was no fool, but a gallant soldier, as can witness his management of the artillery at Solferino. His fault was excessive good nature, which made him loath to tackle the Jobuses and Cris, as peremptorily as his predecessor Marshal Niel had done; he had let them get the upper hand of him, and walked in dread of them. Wherefore, hearing the wife of M. de Cri denounce the doings of the potent league of which her husband was so honoured a member, he marvelled slightly, but ended by smiling, as a Frenchman will do when a pretty woman pleads the cause of a soldier at once brave and handsome. He promised to see into the matter, and next day to the disgust of the Jobuses, who had not been so much as consulted, Cœurpreux received his commission to a full commandantship in that doughty regiment the 25th Cuirassiers, with orders to join as soon as he should have gone to Algeria to fetch his traps and carry despatches to Marshal M'Mahon. The Duke of Magenta laughed in his quiet way when he heard from Cœurpreux, at a private dinner, what things this worthy fellow had endured at the hands of the clerks. He for his own part knew the Jobuses well. Had they not poisoned the Emperor's mind against him by reminding his Majesty on every occasion that Marshal M'Mahon had voted against the Government Bill of Public Safety in the Senate, was a suspicious subject, and enjoyed a dangerous ascendancy over the army? This had prevented the victor of Magenta from ever becoming War Minister, and his viceroyalty in Algeria was virtually an exile. "My poor Cœurpreux," said he smiling, "you do not understand the secret of getting on in life. Here is Marshal Le-bœuf, who writes to me privately that you have been wagging that honest tongue of yours too freely, and he tells me to give you a friendly hint that it won't do." "But, Marshal, I have never breathed a word against the Emperor," protested Cœurpreux. "No," said the Duke, "though perhaps it would have been safer if you had, for the Emperor forgives; but the clerks are more powerful than the Emperor, and they don't forgive. You had best make your peace with them, believe me, Cœurpreux, for

they are stronger than all of us put together;" and the Marshal, who liked soldiers of Cœurpreux's mould, gave him a cigar and went out on the balcony of the Government House to smoke with him and talk about Paris.

Exactly a month after this dialogue, Commandant Cœurpreux, who was installed in his new garrison, received orders along with the rest of the 25th Cuirassiers to go and join Marshal M'Mahon's army on the Rhine, for war had been declared by France against Germany.

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From Blackwood's Magazine.  
THE TWO SPERANSKY.

CONCLUSION. — ELIZABETH.

ELIZAVETA MICHAILOVNA SPERANSKY was now a wife; in 1824 she also became a mother, and we put the fact down here at once, because it is one which coloured her whole future personal life, and one which, long after her father had gone to his rest, must have explained to her the full sanctity of the tie which had existed between him and herself. We have seen that their intercourse, tender and united as it was, had not been positively without a cloud. But Elizabeth had married to please him, and after the birth of her son, Count Michael Speransky paid her his first visit in her home in the provinces. Much was said, but much more must have then been left unsaid between them, while both hearts ached, and while Speransky saw with pain that the presentiment was justified which had once made him say that "no one who had loved him had ever remained happy." It is curious that the reason should have escaped his perspicacity when he first urged on this marriage. M. Bagréeff's solemn pretensions, his vacuity of mind, and his general nullity as a companion, had an effect on Elizabeth's happiness which endless games of cards could not be supposed to counteract! and it was now Speransky's business to try to ameliorate her lot. M. Bagréeff was, through his interest, elevated to the dignity of senator, then called to St. Petersburg, and made Governor of the Bank. It was a bad appointment for the Bank, which, owing to his stupidity, was presently robbed of many millions of roubles by some light-fingered subordinates; but it was good for Elizabeth, as her home was now fixed in the capital.

She was again her father's companion; their house was open to men of letters, and a brilliant society soon grouped itself around them. The historian Karamzine was there, a man fitted by his cultivation, his humanity, and his *quasi-liberal* ideas, to be the historiographer of Alexander the Blessed; Pouchkine came there also with his beautiful wife, and Adam Michievicz the Pole, whose muse was made vocal by the long sorrows of his country. There was also Bruloff the painter; Gogol the satirist, whose comedies rendered him the Kotzebue of Russian official life; and Zoukovsky the poet. The general circle was lettered, elegant, and *decorated*. The peace of Vienna had restored its principal members to affluence — laurels had been reaped; and if some years ago Count Rostopchine had been constrained to set fire to their "*Mother Moscow*," she, like the rest of the country, had proved herself able to rise, phoenix-like, from her ashes.

But the Great War had had another effect upon society, and its smooth-flowing waters covered some very ugly political secrets. The young men who had been to France had imbibed with enthusiasm the new ideas. The leaven of romanticism and of liberalism was at work in them; and when their term of residence in France was past, many officers of the noble guard returned to Russia, only too full of the new ideas, determined to introduce a constitution, and to give to Russia the benefits (albeit questionable enough in some respects) of their own French experience. Secret societies had sprung up, Freemasons' lodges, unions of the "Public Weal," of "National Prosperity," of the "United Slavonians," with others rejoicing in such ominous names as the "Polish Patriots," and the "Reapers." In November 1825, the Emperor Alexander died at Taganrog, and an oath of allegiance was then taken all over the kingdom to his eldest brother Constantine Pavlovitch. It was not the less well known in St. Petersburg that the sceptre of empire was not destined for this, the eldest of the Grand Dukes, but for Nicholas, the greatest and ablest prince of the Romanoff dynasty. Constantine had abdicated, and though the use made of his name by these conspirators may have made him later an object of suspicion to his brother, Nicholas, in November 1825, had no reason to doubt the good faith in which the formal abdication had been made. The eccentric Grand Duke had



been wont to say that the crown would never suit him; that, as the nation had only allowed his father to live for three years, they would certainly not endure his rule for three months; and that, as he preferred to preserve his life, he meant to abide by his resolution of never reigning in Russia. That he was now put forward by the Dekabrist was owing to his peculiar incapacity only: it was such that they hoped to have him first as the tool and afterwards as the victim of their projects: and moreover, his seniority was a powerful engine in their hands for preventing the accession of the too capable Nicholas. On the morning of the 14th December, Madame Speransky-Bagréeff drove out in her sledge, but on reaching the Admiralty Square, she found a great crowd assembled there; her horses' heads were turned by two friends; and by the time that she reached her house a rattle of musketry was audible, and the rebellion had become an undeniable fact. The army had revolted. The ringleaders were leavened through with the liberal ideas of which we have spoken; but they had appealed to the soldiers in the name of legitimacy; and persuaded as these were that Constantine was being robbed of his birthright, regiment after regiment had refused to take the oaths to Nicholas. While Elizabeth hurried home, her father had to gallop to the scene of action, where, confronting his revolted legions, stood their new, terrible, and Jove-like Tzar.

By three o'clock that short December day was drawing to its close — the darkness was approaching; still in the great Square, and on the Isaac Bridge, the insurgents made good their stand. Not that they were undismayed. Prince Serge Troubetzkoi, who was to have headed them, was absent; and Obolensky, who replaced him, was neither a warrior nor a strategist. Two Metropolitans in full canonicals had already implored them to lay down their arms; shots had been fired, and Miloradovich and Stürler had fallen on the one side and on the other. At this moment Count Toll\* galloped up to the Emperor, and said to him, "Sire, command that the place be swept by cannon, or resign your throne." The guns were fired; and when the day was done, Nicholas returned to his palace, and to a trembling wife, and to a boy of seven years old, whom he could now first greet as the Tzarévitch of all the Russias. The

revolt was quelled; — then came the trial, the sentence, and the execution of the conspirators.

At the head of the list was the name of Prince Serge Troubetzkoi, of the Preobrazhensky regiment of Body-Guards; but it included other officers of the Guards, privy councillors, secretaries, and members of nearly all the noblest families of Russia and Lithuania. Now comes the question, What knowledge, if any, had Speransky of all this mischief? On the night of the 13th December, through what one of his biographers calls a "*fatalité déplorable*," several of the conspirators were dining in his daughter's house. But it is still more remarkable that in the original plan drawn up by the conspirators in Prince Obolensky's house, and on no more remote a day than the 12th December, Speransky was named by them as a member of the provisional government which they intended to establish. Admiral Mordvinof was to have been associated with him.

This fact rests on the evidence of a military man present at the arrangement.\*

Now we may imagine, and it is possible to do so, that Speransky knew nothing of this flattering but highly dangerous preference for himself, and that he was ignorant of the honour in store for him: still it inflicts a shock on the mind when one finds him taking up a high moral and political attitude, and sitting on the tribunal before which these Dekabrist conspirators, young and old, were arraigned. Nicholas Tourgenieff, Confidential Secretary to the Imperial Council, and one of the first batch of thirty-one victims sentenced to be beheaded, thus comments on the fact: "One of the members of the supreme tribunal was Speransky, said to be the cleverest of them all. This is the same man of whom I have spoken in another place. He became, so to speak, the *factotum* of the trial; and he it was who presented the final report to the Emperor, in which his Majesty was begged not to pardon the condemned. . . . Speransky, to whom no one can deny many other qualities, did not possess that of courage: in defending me he feared to seem to defend some Liberal principles; and what frightened him most was the fact that, in the eyes of many persons, he was already suspected of entertaining them."

\* Afterwards head of the police.

\* Russian Conspirators in Siberia. By Baron R—. Translated by Evelyn St. John Mildmay.



After reading the above, it is difficult not to say to one's self, that if Made-moiselle Speransky had once been ready to act the pretty part of "Elizabeth, the exile of Siberia," her father showed on this occasion his fitness for the less elevated rôle of the celebrated "Vicar of Bray." The explanation of the situation seems to be this: Speransky, the priest's son, had started in life as a theoretical but ambitious Liberal. Between such theories, fostered by the philanthropy of a Tzar, and the secret practices of a conspiracy, whose ends were clearly revolutionary, he became aware of a great and judicious difference; and, moreover, the liberal Tzar, who was wont to say of himself that he "was a happy accident" in Russian history, was dead. The Dekabrist, on their side, had heard of the fame of Speransky's early theories, of his disgrace, and of his banishment. Nay, more — they may have picked up in his daughter's *salon* some of his latest sentiments, such as "my real friends are the poor and lowly, prisoners and exiles;" and they may have been led to reckon on his help in opposing the reactionary rule of Nicholas.

Of course it is understood that the conspirators had cherished no abstract feeling of devotion to Constantine, but were simply determined to oppose the accession of the younger man, who would have but one remedy for Liberal sentiments, and who would set himself once and for all above all laws ancient or recent. But Speransky, whatever sympathy he might have had with exiles, had had too much personal experience of Siberia ever to put himself again *dans cette galère*. Accordingly he sat on the supreme tribunal, saw five young lives pay the penalty of rebellion, and a long train of political criminals, one hundred and sixteen in all, wend their way to the snowy prison which he knew only too well. Among them was his own secretary, a lad whom the Governor had brought from Siberia with him, and whom he had since treated almost as a son, Madame Speransky-Bagréeff petitioning in vain for his pardon.

In the eyes of the new Tzar, M. Speransky at any rate happily contrived to appear perfectly innocent; and being a very valuable public servant, he continued in harness till his death — one asks one's self, at what sacrifice to self-respect or to principle? since the policy of Nicholas was eminently antipathetic to the ideas he had once entertained. "No dreams, gentlemen, no dreams,"

the new Tzar had said to the Polish nobles whose heads Alexander had filled with the semblance of a constitution, and with visions of indulgence for their national spirit. If the same words were not precisely addressed to the Russian Liberals, the same idea was often conveyed to them in very cogent methods; and such dangerous topics as the emancipation of the serfs had to be dropped *sine die*.

The old Russian party was now flattered by a Tzar who desired his nobility to speak Russian, who patronized the national dress, and who encouraged a good deal of Philo-Sclavonic literature and fashion, provided always these were kept free of Neology and of Liberalism.

Nicholas loved Russia: he believed in himself as her visible head, as the fountain of honour, and as the dispenser, not of justice, but of favour. He was the very embodiment of autocracy, for he had its majesty, its grace, its charms, and its caprices. There have been many more tyrannical sovereigns in Russia than Nicholas Pavlovitch, but there never has been a Tzar so perfectly arbitrary. Like his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, he had a passion for soldiering in all its details, and he was a martinet in discipline; but he sometimes showed mercy, and he took pleasure in doing so, because such clemency is but another kind of power. He acted and looked his part as no crowned monarch ever has done before or since; and he did it consciously, enjoying the effect which he produced on the mind of the spectator. "Have you no fear?" he once asked a very young maid of honour, whom he found, on the first morning after her introduction to her duties at the palace, perched upon a window-sill, and reading a novel of Mrs. Gaskell's aloud to a laughing companion, who seemed to enjoy the jokes in "Cranford" as much as herself. The great Tzar expected to have made more impression even on two young girls! Some such jealous vanity made him very harsh even with women, when they had displeased him. For example, he abhorred Madame Swetchine, on account of her wandering tastes and generally Western habits of thought. A still more serious crime was her apostasy to the Church of Rome, when she became the leader of a faction which sent more than one Russian nobleman into the ranks of the Order of Jesus. Madame Speransky-Bagréeff found him also eminently unfriendly through all the vicissitudes of

her career; and in all probability the *fatalité déplorable* of her ill-selected dinner-party of the 13th December was never forgiven by him.

Once that period of intrigue, disorder, and anxiety was outlived, the literary circle which surrounded the Minister's daughter was ready to become as brilliant as before; but Madame Speransky-Bagréeff's biography now becomes in great part that of a landowner and of a mother. Of a landowner, because her father had bought for her an estate called Bowromka; and because the welfare of Bowromka and its peasants, the rise and fall of prices, the sale of wood, and the erection of model farms, dispensaries, and schools, occupied her time and emptied her purse. M. Bagréeff was as unfortunate as a landlord as he had been as a governor of the Bank; and in all these capacities he had the misfortune to sink more and more in his wife's esteem. But she had become the mother of three children. Of these the youngest, who was a boy, only lived two years; but Michael, her first-born, fulfilled all the promise of his youth; and the education of her only daughter already caused her many hopes and fears, while it occupied her days. For them she wrote her first books, tales for children and short plays; while the *farouche* temper of Mademoiselle Bagréeff, afterwards Princess Cantacuzene, is probably reflected in "Irène," a novel on the benefits of education, which only saw the light in 1857, and which is perhaps the most *Edgeworthian* of all the mother's works.

Of M. Bagréeff all this time she saw but little: very possibly this arrangement may have been one which had met with the consent of both parties; but none the less it probably had its share in intensifying the peculiarities of Mademoiselle Bagréeff's character. Whether caused by quarrels about money, by incompatibility of tastes and tempers, or by still graver wrongs, the mother's estrangement from the father of her children was now complete—so complete that when M. Bagréeff for the last time announced a visit to her, that visit was not accepted; and when he died rather suddenly, their daughter only was with him—no reconciliation between her parents having been procured or attempted.

One of the causes which in the beginning may have helped to disunite the couple, and to keep them separate, had been Madame Elizabeth's health. Always delicate, child-bearing and house-

hold worries had told greatly upon her strength; and in 1833, and again in 1834, she had gone to the sea-baths of Skeveningen to recruit. The first of these trips had been the first occasion on which Speransky's daughter crossed the boundaries of "Holy Russia," or trod the soil of one of those Western kingdoms with whose histories and institutions her father had made her acquainted. Did she, like Madame Swetchine, feel that she then breathed a freer air? She does not say so, but she became a great traveller.

With her as with many of her countrymen, travel grew at once into a habit and a passion. The already encumbered estate of Bowromka was left to the tender mercies of *intendants*, of whom Madame Speransky-Bagréeff had six in seven years; and like most of the landowners of her day, she soon found herself deeply in debt to the Government, which is always happy to assist a Russian noble to mortgage his lands and villages.

What, under these adverse circumstances, became of the schools, dispensaries, sugar-factories, and model farms, the biographer of Madame Speransky-Bagréeff, M. Victor Duret, does not say. What it is impossible to conceal is, that her daughter, and her daughter's Greek husband took her financial measures in quite as bad part as she had ever done the meddling and muddling of her late husband, and that something very like a quarrel was the consequence. None the less, and perhaps all the more for this very reason, she travelled to Egypt, to the Holy Land—whither she had vowed to make a pilgrimage—to England, to Vienna, to Paris, to Brussels, and to Hungary.

These travels form the ground-plan of many of her novels, and supply much of the local colouring of her works. Take, for example, "Les Pélerins Russes, à Jérusalem," published at Brussels in 1854. Here Speransky's daughter puts out a great deal of her strength, and in her sketch of the deacon, in "Une nuit au Golgotha," she has left a touching portrait of the priest's son, Michael Gramatine, who, in the seminary of Vladimir, had once formed ambitious hopes, and who had lived to realize many of them for, and with, and in herself. The book is written in French. Prosper Mérimée writes to her to congratulate her, and to praise its careful and vigorous idioms. It has added, he says, to his wish to know Russia and the Russians; but he has one reproach to make to her, one fault to

find,—it is all too sad; and “life is such a sad thing, that clever people ought to be compelled always to write gay things, so as to divert one a little from things as they are.”

But Madame Elizabeth was sad; and she had good cause to be so. Something not quite unlike fame was now coming to her from her writings; but then fame is, as Madame de Staël, who was a good judge, averred, “a royal mourning, in purple, for happiness.” Furthermore, the authoress was poor, and she had a thousand troubles at home which, had she been on the spot, would have been vexatious enough to arrange, and which at a distance were hopeless. She was on bad terms with her daughter, as she had been with her husband; she had frequent attacks of rheumatic gout, an enemy which is apt to hang upon the flanks of all brain-workers; she was in no favour at Court, and that in a country where Court favour is the all in all: she might, if she liked, change her skies, but she could not change her mind; publishers worried her, and editors occasionally mangled and dismembered her pieces; and by her fireside, in two empty chairs—those of her father and of her son—there sat the shadow feared by man.

Count Michael Speransky's death, in 1839, had been at least a natural one; but young Michael Bigréeff had been killed in the Caucasus by a comrade who was maddened with drink, and who, in the dark, drew his sword upon the boy who had tried to prevent a drunken riot and a scandalous fight. His mother never recovered from this shock. Her intelligence survived it, and her energy remained, along with the necessities for work, for money, and for intercourse with her fellow-workers; but her heart was broken. It may not have shown much in her novels; but there is a little book which has only been published since her death, and which, as the “*Livre d'une Femme*,” lets one into many secrets of the woman's life. We see its loneliness. Then, after some sharp struggles to forgive the enemies of her father, and the murderer of her son, comes a gentler sense of pity and of humility—some dust to put on her own head—many tears to give to past errors, and a lingering passionate return to that great and tender love which had subsisted between her father and herself. One says a return, because at the time of Count Michael Speransky's death many circumstances must have conspired to divert

her sense of pain into other channels than the purely filial one. He had died full of years, with his “*Sword*” or code a completed monument for his renown; full, we may say, too, of honour—that is, of such honour as despotism has to bestow on a man who has been, through two reigns, at once its good angel and its tool, its favourite, its adviser, and its victim. Full, certainly, of experience and of labour. Both health and strength for some months gave signs of distress; but his august master would not allow him to interpret these as a warning to cease from all literary and responsible work. And so the Minister died in hardness, after an apoplectic stroke, on the 23d of February 1839. The Tzar, who grieved for him, or who at least missed him, would not, however, befriend his daughter. Elizabeth was poor, but the Emperor Nicholas gave her no pension; and M. Bigréeff, who had accumulated some capital, and who had built expectations upon the position of his father-in-law, now took arbitrary possession of any fortune which could be said to belong to his wife. He was dissatisfied with its amount, and Elizabeth was displeased with the uses to which he appropriated it. High words ensued, and the separation which we know of followed as a consequence. Thus it had happened that in its first years Elizabeth's filial sorrow was greatly turned to bitterness, and deformed by anger both against her husband and against the Government of the Tzar, which had possessed itself of all her father's papers and literary remains. It was only in later years and when this soreness had ceased to be felt, that her filial feelings were able to reassert themselves in all their simplicity. Certainly Madame Speransky-Bigréeff is never so much a woman, and never more truly attractive, than in those passages where her grief as a daughter and as a mother finds vent. Many of the pages of the “*Livre d'une Femme*” are devoted to these themes, and many more to meditations on the Scriptures—a study which she had always shared, as a girl, with M. Speransky, and which now occupied many of the saddened years of her declining life.

M. Speransky had interested himself greatly in the translation of the Bible into Russ; but in one of his Siberian letters he begs his daughter not to read the Word of God except in Slavonic—that is, in the time-honoured language and idioms appropriated to the service of

the "*Orthodox*" Church. The vulgar tongue, he says, deprives the sacred writings of their majestic beauty, and lays them open to the jarring of vulgar and trivial associations.

His own commentary on the Gospel of St. John, Elizabeth was wont to render into German; and many a long winter's day had the father and daughter spent over the MSS., which the latter was afterwards to preserve with pious care. The work was probably intended for publication—at least, M. Speransky seems to hint at this when he says, "Your thoughts about inspiration are so attractive that I am tempted to write an essay upon them, and to demonstrate that inspiration is not an illusion, but in truth a very real and substantial property of the Spirit. We can speak of this when we meet, and when I am able to write the book which I have been thinking of for years." The book never saw the light; but 200 *folio* sheets of commentary remained in his daughter's care, and often afforded texts for the remarks and notes which abound in the "*Livre d'une Femme*." But the daughter is less "orthodox" than the father. For example, we find Speransky dwelling with pleasure on the belief in the Guardian Angel; and though he has been accused of holding Protestant ideas, he often speaks of Protestants with great reprobation, as persons who, "under the pretence of a greater spirituality, have refined their faith into mere abstract propositions, banished gentle and devout feelings from religion, and left it blunt, coarse, and spiritless." Elizabeth has a good deal of this same mysticism; but she often differs freely from the teaching of her own Church, though she was never tempted to do like Madame Swetchine, and to abjure it for that of any other communion. It is doubtful, however, whether the "*Livre d'une Femme*" would be considered as an altogether orthodox work in any Church. It is full of curious speculations, especially on the subject of the transmigration of souls; yet when read in the light of the events of Elizabeth's life and of her mistakes, some of its confessions are very pathetic.

It is difficult through the medium of a translation to convey any idea of the excellence of style or of the grace which distinguishes some of Madame Speransky-Bagréeff's sayings. She is a less powerful and a less eloquent writer than Madame Swetchine; and her writings, with the exception of one novel, of which

we propose to give a sketch, are less likely to live than are the letters of her friend,—letters all alive with those strong sympathies, and with that ardent love of God and of her neighbour, which made Madame Swetchine a real power in the society of her day. Elizabeth's style is more studied, and throughout her whole career her paragraphs sound as if they had been composed with a view to her father's praise or blame. Both women were very sensitive to the approach of old age. Madame Swetchine's remarks on it have the sustained dignity of a mind determined to rise above that last weakness, and to see always more of heaven through "chinks that time has made;" but Elizabeth lets a cry escape from her now and then,—"*See*," she exclaims, "what generally fills up a woman's life once youth is past; sicknesses of the body, sorrows of the soul, regrets for the past, and fears for the future! But let women resign themselves; let them crown themselves with thorns, and walk without murmuring in the austere way of the Cross."

Against her own share of these haunting fears and regrets Madame Speransky-Bagréeff was still also able to defend herself by work, and by the friendships which her works had helped to gather round her.

Of all her novels, the one which is most likely to live is "*Une famille Tongouse*." It is thoroughly original, and written with great spirit; while the scenes, the characters, and the treatment of them all carry her readers into a new country, and give us the pleasure of new associations,—and yet the simple plot is founded on those feelings which, as Lamartine says, "keep the heart of humanity ever young." Its Siberian details have evidently been elaborated by Madame Speransky-Bagréeff as a labour of love, and many of them are very curious.

She begins by telling us that on the very confines of civilization, and on the borders of the Lake Baikal, which the Cossacks and Siberians dignify with the name of the Holy Sea, there dwelt in a small *Stanitsa*, or commune, two families distinguished by their labours and virtues. The first was that of the village priest, the *père* Jossiff, with his gentle wife; the other was that of the Cossack, Wassili-Ivanoff, with a helpmate who might have sat for one of the Biblical portraits, so virtuous, hard-working, and devoted was she. Wassili (Basil) was a mighty hunter, a faithful subject of the



distant Tzar, an orthodox believer, a successful fisher and fowler, and a good judge of furs. His days and nights spent in the forest or on the borders of the lake, had brought him often in contact with the stray Tongouses who ventured near the Christian *Stanitzas*, and exchanges of furs and of good offices had passed between him and these nomads. The Tongouses, like the Bouriates, occupy a good deal of the country between China and the Lake Baikal. They are now diminishing in numbers and courage; but their numbers, as far as they could be ascertained, were, in 1857, somewhere about 50,000 males. They wander from frontier to frontier, and sometimes pay *tessak*, or tribute of furs, to both emperors, of Russia and of China. Some of the tribes are more warlike than others; but the neighbours of the Cossack Wassili belonged principally to the less noteworthy *Kellems*, or solitary Tongouses, whom the Siberians both hated as pagans, and despised because they were so little formidable. Jossiff, the priest, often preached toleration and kindness to his flock; but it was in vain that he told them that example was the best way of making proselytes. Except Wassili-Ivanoff, no one had any charity for the stealthy wandering Tongouses who trapped the game of the forest, caught the fish of the Holy Sea, worshipped *Shaitans*, or devils, and were led by *Shamans*, necromantic priests, half soothsayers, half impostors, and whole rogues. Unlike the Bouriates, the Tongouses have not been elevated to Bouddhism, and their superstitions are as debased as they are cruel.

Wassili the Cossack died, and his widow Salomèa and his son Alexei were left to mourn his loss by an accident in hunting. But it soon seemed that they and their Christian neighbours in the *Stanitzas* were not alone in their grief. The good deeds of Wassili still followed him. Some grateful Tongouse brought offerings by night to his grave—fossil ivory, and furs and fruits; and at last, most embarrassing of all, a basket was found on the tomb, containing an infant—a little girl. The fashion of adopting children is not uncommon in Russia—so little so, that their service-book contains a liturgical office for the ceremony of adoption: and Salomèa was rich; but then to adopt a child of the devil, a little heretic! was that to be thought of? The whole commune was in an uproar; and public opinion, which was represented in

it by the Attaman Stéphan-Grégorieff, and still more by his talkative spouse, was set against the little girl, called alternately "pig," and heretic, and changing! However, the foundling, baptized Marie, continued to live in Salomèa's house, where, though she certainly exhibited no signs of vice, or of anything but previous starvation, her gestures and looks were all considered unearthly; "and," quoth Salomèa, her unwilling mother, "your Reverence must admit, that for a widow who fears God, such a visitation is not agreeable."

The worst part of it was that the little Tongouse was a girl. Even his Reverence felt that to be a trial. Public opinion in the mouth of the Attaman again observed, that had it been a boy they might have made a good Cossack out of a bad heathen, and had a good soldier for their father the Tzar; but this was only a poor soul, of the female sex, and the most they could do for it was to deliver it from Satan and his *Shamans*. "Souls are of no gender," replied the *père* Jossiff, who accordingly made the education of little Marie his especial care. Salomèa had to resign herself; and Marie grew up, a child of the Church, but also a child of the forest, where it was thought she had rendezvous with more than with its birds and berries. That was hard on Salomèa; but what was more serious was, that Alexei in process of time loved the meek little foundling, and that she loved him in return with the passion of her lonely life and fantastic nature. He knew that her Tongouse family still lived near them; he had already had to defend the girl from the machinations of her tribe and of its *Shaman*; but he asked her not the less to be his wife. They married, after some unwillingness on the part of the girl, lest she should bring more trouble on his house,—and then Marie's sorrows began. She felt all the stain of her strange heathen parentage, and got to dread the same blot on her child when she should become a mother. Alexei stood by her; but she saw that she had not brought him happiness, and sorrow ate away day by day the Tongouse's sleep, her strength, and her beauty;—for in spite of her Mongolian descent, Marie was very pretty, and was as gentle as she was pretty. Then Alexei also began to pine. The *Shaman* had laid spells on him, his mother said—on her "red sun, her little soul!"—and darker and darker grew the horizon of Marie's life. Then her heathen kinsfolk dogged her, and the



*Shaman* cursed her, and tried to terrify her; but Marie was a Christian, and would never cast in her lot with his cruel and filthy rites. Then, to make the matter worse, it seemed that among the *Yours* of the Tongouses she had a brother, and that they had long known and met each other in the forest. Hassourdaï feared the *Shaman* more than Marie did; and though, in the fulness of time, he too joined the Christian community, he was anything but an acceptable addition to Salomèa's family. Alexei was constantly in trouble on his wife's account; and his mother was so embittered by all the results of his marriage, that he hardly knew whether to grieve or not when Marie's child died. "Sleep, my child," she sang to its little corpse; "thou shalt sleep quietly under the damp sod. Thy mother does not weep. An orphan in a strange place, she would not wish thee the same fate; sown with sorrows, watered with tears, and surrounded with griefs as with a wall, we do not belong to this place." Finally, Marie died, leaning on the arms of the priest and of her faithful Alexei. "Do not mourn for me, Alexei Wassiliwich; I belong to a frail race, and have little life in me. The little joy I have ever had has come from your love, as well as from those hopes which make my passage to another world easy." "Mother," she added, turning to Salomèa, who was weeping in a corner, "grant me your prayers. I leave you your son. He is quite young; he will bring you from beyond the seas a daughter whom you can love, and then you will be able to remember without bitterness your kindness in adopting a poor Tongouse orphan. Put my brother's arrow into my grave. I am the last of my family—of that silent and solitary race which the world holds so cheap. *Père Jossiff*, pray for your spiritual child."

Alexei, adds Madame Speransky-Bagrèeff, enlisted, and went to the war in the Crimea. "This is a sad story," she concludes, "but wild life is on this wise; and the strange fusion of races which has been going on for centuries in Siberia (about which Europe troubles itself not at all), does give rise to such episodes." Of the story which we have so rapidly sketched here, some of the pages are written with as much power as pathos.

Written in French, and published in Paris or Brussels, as Madame Speransky-Bagrèeff's books were, their subjects were generally Russian. Her "*Vie de Château dans l'Ukraine*" is a picture of domestic

life in the provinces, such as she had lived it; and her "*Iles de la Neva*" is a description of some of the environs of St. Petersburg, familiar enough to herself, if new to her readers. It was not published till after the death of the Emperor Nicholas, and it contains a notice of him. Describing the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul, under whose walls the traveller is supposed to be floating, she recapitulates its great dead—Peter and Catharine, and the Emperor Alexander. "But," she adds, "he who was last laid there was the greatest of all. He has beaten even his ancestor, for he has conquered for himself a place in the hearts of his people. His private virtues, his ardent faith and piety, his love of his country, his zeal for her interests, his incessant efforts for her glory and prosperity," all these things, she says, "will secure him an imperishable memory." If these were Madame Bagrèeff's sentiments towards the great Tzar, they were by no means reciprocated; and her loyalty made her forget that when Nicholas died, the country was suffering cruelly, both in men and money, from a war into which his ambitious temper had hurried her, and which had not even been successful. However, Madame Speransky-Bagrèeff did not spare her praise. Almost immediately after the death of the Emperor she published an account of his last hours, of the funeral, and of the demonstrations of feeling made by the populace of St. Petersburg. The paper had a certain popularity; but, read some years after the event, it fails to please. It is too much written to order—it exaggerates; and then again, perhaps because it was written to be read in high places, it naturally misses many of the striking and almost terrible details of that august death-bed and funeral. Many of these details are now woven in with the legends of a people peculiarly impressionable to signs and tokens; many more have become matter of history; while some remain engraven only in the memories of those who looked for the last time on that colossal corpse before it was consigned to the fortress of Peter and Paul.

In 1856, Madame Speransky-Bagrèeff travelled, and visited many of her literary friends in Paris and in Germany. It is pleasant to think that in the last year of her life she saw grouped around her women like Madame Swetchine and Madame Soldan, and men like M. de Falloux, Fallmerayer, Grillparzer, and Werner. From Vienna she made another attempt

to win the favour or notice of her own Court. She offered to the Emperor Alexander II. the whole of the political papers and MSS. of the late Count Spersansky. The offer was graciously received; and a pension was at last granted to the daughter of one of the best public servants Russia has ever possessed. A return to St. Petersburg was then planned for the spring of 1857; but Elizabeth's health was beginning, like her father's, to suffer from the effects of constant mental exertion. Inflammation of the brain proved fatal to her at Vienna on the 3rd of April, and put an end to the separation which had so long existed between her and her father, and the son she had so bitterly mourned. At last, as the Russian proverb expresses it, "with two hands crossed on the breast, labour was done."

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From The Cornhill Magazine.  
A ROSE IN JUNE.

#### CHAPTER I.

"MARTHA, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. Let the child alone—she will never be young again if she should live a hundred years!"

These words were spoken in the garden of Dinglefield Rectory on a very fine summer day a few years ago. The speaker was Mr. Damerel, the Rector, a middle-aged man with very fine, somewhat worn features, a soft benignant smile, and, as everybody said who knew him, the most charming manners in the world. He was a man of very elegant mind as well as manners. He did not preach often, but when he did preach all the educated persons in his congregation felt that they had very choice fare indeed set before them. I am afraid the poor folk liked the Curate best, but then the Curate liked them best, and it mattered very little to any man or woman of refinement what sentiment existed between the cottagers and the Curate. Mr. Damerel was perfectly kind and courteous to everybody, gentle and simple, who came in his way, but he was not fond of poor people in the abstract. He disliked everything that was unlovely, and alas! there are a great many unlovely things in poverty. The Rectory garden at Dinglefield is a delightful place. The house is on the summit of a little hill, or rather table-land, for in the front, towards the Green, all is level and soft as becomes an English village; but on the other side the descent begins

towards the lower country, and from the drawing-room windows and the lawn, where Mr. Damerel now sat, the view extended over a great plain, lighted up with links of the river, and fading into unspeakable hazes of distance, such as were the despair of every artist, and the delight of the fortunate people who lived there, and were entertained day by day with the sight of all the sunsets, the mid-day splendours, the flying shadows, and soft prolonged twilights. Mr. Damerel was fond of saying that no place he knew so lent itself to idleness as this. "Idleness! I speak as the foolish ones speak," he would say, "for what occupation could be more ennobling than to watch those gleams and shadows—all nature spread out before you, and demanding attention, though so softly that only they who have ears hear? I allow, my gentle Nature here does not shout at you, and compel your regard, like her who dwells among the Alps, for instance. My dear, you are always practical—but so long as you leave me my landscape I want little more."

Thus the Rector would discourse. It was very little more he wanted—only to have his garden and lawn in perfect order, swept and trimmed every morning like a lady's boudoir, and refreshed with every variety of flower: to have his table not heavily loaded with vulgar English joints, but daintily covered, and oh! so daintily served; the linen always fresh, the crystal always fine, the ladies dressed as ladies should be: to have his wine, of which he said he took very little, always fine, of choice vintage, and with a bouquet which rejoiced the heart: to have plenty of new books: to have quiet, undisturbed by the noise of the children, or any other troublesome noise such as broke the harmony of nature: and especially undisturbed by bills and cares, such as, he declared, at once shorten the life and take all pleasure out of it. This was all he required; and surely never man had tastes more moderate, more innocent, more virtuous and refined.

The little scene to which I have thus abruptly introduced the reader took place in the most delicious part of the garden. The deep stillness of noon was over the sunshiny world; part of the lawn was brilliant in light; the very insects were subdued out of their buzz of activity by the spell of the sunshine; but here, under the lime-tree, there was grateful shade, where everything took breath. Mr. Damerel was seated in a chair which

had been made expressly for him, and which combined the comfort of soft cushions with such a rustic appearance as became its habitation out of doors; under his feet was a soft Persian rug in colours blended with all the harmony which belongs to the Eastern loom; at his side a pretty carved table, with a raised rim, with books upon it, and a thin Venice glass containing a rose. Another Rose, the Rose of my story, was half-sitting half-reclining on the grass at his feet—a pretty light figure in a soft muslin dress, almost white, with bits of soft rose-coloured ribbon here and there. She was the eldest child of the house. Her features I do not think were at all remarkable, but she had a bloom so soft, so delicate, so sweet, that her father's fond title for her, "a Rose in June," was everywhere acknowledged as appropriate. A rose of the very season of roses was this Rose. Her very smile, which came and went like breath, never away for two minutes together, yet never lasting beyond the time you took to look at her, was flowery too, I can scarcely tell why. For my own part, she always reminded me not so much of a garden-rose in its glory, as of a branch of wild roses all blooming and smiling from the bough, here pink, here white, here with a dozen ineffable tints. Her hair was light-brown with the least little curl in the world just about her forehead, but shining like satin on her pretty head; her eyes too were brown, with a dancing gleam of light in each; the delicate eyebrows curved, the eyelashes curved, the lips curved, all wavy and rounded. Life and light shone out of the girl, and sweet unconscious happiness. In all her life she had never had any occasion to ask herself she was happy. Of course she was happy! did not she live, and was not that enough? Rose Damerel was the last dainty ornament of his house in which her father delighted most. He had spoiled her lessons when she was younger because of his pleasure in her and her pretty looks, and he interfered now almost altogether with that usefulness in a house which is demanded by every principle of duty from the eldest daughter of a large family; for alas! there was a large family, a thing which was the cause of all trouble to the Damerels. Had there been only Rose, and perhaps one brother, how much more pleasantly would everything have gone! In that case there might have been fewer lines in the brow of the third person whom

Mr. Damerel spoke to, but whom the reader has not yet seen.

What Mrs. Damerel was like in her June of life, when she married her husband and was a Rose too, like her daughter, it is difficult to tell. Life, which often makes so little real change, brings out much that is latent both of good and evil. I have said she was a Rose, like her daughter—and so, indeed, she was still, so far as formal documents went; but, somehow or other, the name had gone from her. She had acquired from her husband, at first in joke and loving banter of her early cares of housekeeping, while they were still no more than married lovers, the name of Martha, and by degrees that name had so fastened to her that no one recognized her by any other. Nobody out of her own family knew that it was not her name, and of course the children, some of whom were indignant at the change, could not set it right. In her letters she signed herself "R. M. Damerel"—never Rose; and her correspondents took it for granted that the "M" stood for Martha. That she was careful and troubled about many things was the Rector's favourite joke. "My careful wife—my anxious wife," he called her, and, poor soul, not without a cause. For it stands to reason that when a man must not be disturbed about bills, for example, his wife must be, and doubly; when a man cannot bear the noise of children, his wife must and doubly; and even when a clergyman dislikes poverty, and unlovely cottages, and poor rooms, which are less sweet than the lawn and the roses, why his wife must, and make up for his fastidiousness. She had eight children, and a husband of the most refined tastes of any clergyman in England, and an income—not so much as might have been desired. Alas! how few of us have so much as might be desired! Good rich people, you who have more money than you want, how good you ought to be to us, out of pure gratitude to heaven for the fact that you can pay your bills when you like, and never need to draw lines on your forehead with thinking which is imperative and which will wait! Mrs. Damerel was well-dressed—she could not help it—for that was one of the Rector's simple luxuries. Fortunately, in summer it is not so difficult to be well-dressed at a small cost. She had on (if any one cares to know) a dress of that light brown linen which everybody has taken to wearing of

late, over an old black silk petticoat, which, having been good once, looked good even when tottering on the brink of the grave. She was no more than forty, and but for her cares, would have looked younger; but June was long over for this Rose, and the lines in her forehead contradicted the softness of the natural curves in her features. Those lines were well ruled in, with rigid straightening, by an artist who is very indifferent to curves and prettiness, and had given a certain closeness, and almost sternness, to the firm-shutting of her mouth. I am afraid, though she had great command of herself, that Mr. Damerel's delightful and unbroken serenity had an irritating effect on his wife, in addition to the effects produced by her burden of care; and irritation works with a finer and more delicate pencil than even anxiety. She had come out this morning to ask Rose's help with the children, to whom, among her other fatigues, she had lately begun to give lessons, finding the daily governess from the village impracticable. She had been called away to other duties, and the children were alone in the schoolroom. She had just asked her daughter to go in and take charge of them, and I scarcely think—let alone the answer she had just received from her husband—that the sight of this cool, fresh, delightful leisure in direct contrast with the hot house, and the schoolroom, where all the children were more tiresome than usual by reason of the heat, had any agreeable effect upon Mrs. Damerel's nerves. Such a contrast to one's frets and annoyances seldom is deeply consolatory.

"Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things—let the child alone!"

The Rector smiled, yet his tone was one of playful reproof. His was the superior position. With the soft air fanning him, and the shade refreshing him, and the beautiful landscape displaying itself for him, and all the flowers blooming, the leaves waving, the butterflies fluttering, the pretty daughter prattling, all for his pleasure, master of the creation as he was, he was in a position to reprove any harsh and hasty intruder who brought into this Paradise a discordant note.

"I do not want to burden her youth," said Mrs. Damerel, with a resolute quiet in her voice, which her children knew the sound of, and which they all learned to recognize as the tone of suppressed irritation, "but I think it would do Rose

no harm, Herbert, to make herself useful a little and help me."

"Useful!" he said, with a half-pitying smile, "the other roses are still less useful. What would you have the child do? Let her get the good of this beautiful morning. Besides, she is useful to me."

"Ah," said Mrs. Damerel, faltering slightly, "if she is doing anything for you, Herbert!"

"My dear," said the Rector, with a gentle elevation of his eyebrows, "don't confound things which are different. Doing something is your sole idea of human use, I know. No, Rose is doing nothing—it helps me to have her there. She is part of the landscape; suppose you sit down yourself, instead of fretting, and enjoy it."

"Enjoy it!" Mrs. Damerel echoed, with faint irony. She heard already the noise of the schoolroom growing louder and louder, and Mary, the housemaid, stood at the door, looking out anxiously, shading her eyes from the sun, for the mistress. Some one was waiting, she knew, in the hall, to see her; pray heaven not some one with a bill! "I am afraid I must go back to my work," she said, "and I hope you will come to me, Rose, as soon as your papa can spare you. I have no more time now."

Rose stirred uneasily, half-rising, and, with a prick of conscience, made a feeble attempt to detain her. "But mamma—" she began, as her mother moved away, crossing the broad sunshine of the lawn with hasty steps. Mrs. Damerel did not or would not hear, but went swiftly into the house as they watched her, meeting Mary, who was coming with a message. Her light dress shone out for a moment in the fierce blaze of the sunshine, and then disappeared. When she was out of sight the Rector said softly, changing his position with the leisureliness of extreme comfort, putting undermost the leg which had been uppermost, "What a pity that your mother does not see the beauty of repose more than she does! If I had not learnt long ago to take no notice, I don't know what I might not have been worried into by now."

"Mamma never worries any one," said Rose flushing at once with instantaneous opposition. The more she felt guilty towards her mother, the less she would hear a word to her discredit. She blazed up quite hot and fiery, with a loyalty which was a very good quality in its way, though not so good as helping in the schoolroom. The father put forth his



fine ivory hand, and patted her pretty head.

"Quite right, dear, quite right," he said; "always stand up for your mother. And it is true, she never worries anybody; but I wish she had more perception of the excellence of repose."

"Perhaps if she had we should not be able to enjoy it so much," said the girl, still giving expression to a slight compunction.

"Very well said, Rose; and it is quite possible you are right again. We should not be so comfortable, and the house would not go on wheels as it does, if she thought more of her own ease. One star differeth from another star in glory," said Mr. Damerel who was fond of quoting Scripture, almost the only point in him which savoured slightly of the Church. "At the same time, my Rose in June, when you marry yourself—as I suppose you will one day—remember that there is nothing that worries a man like being too constantly reminded of the struggle and wear and tear that life demands. He has enough of that outside in the world," said the Rector, gazing out over the fair prospect before him, and again changing the position of his legs, "without having it thrust upon him in what ought to be the sanctity of his home."

Rose looked at her father with a little dawning wonder mingled with the admiration she felt for him. As a picture, Mr. Damerel was perfect. He had a fine head, with beautiful and refined features, and that paleness which has always been found to be so much more interesting than brighter colouring. He lay half-reclined in his easy chair, with his eyes dreamily regarding the landscape, and the book he had been reading closed over his hand. That hand was in itself a patent of gentility, and his whole appearance confirmed the title. Somewhat fragile—a piece of delicate porcelain among the rough delf of this world—not able to endure much knocking about; fastidious, loving everything that was beautiful, and supporting with difficulty that which was not, the Rector looked like a choice example of the very height of civilization and refinement. And everything around him was in harmony. The velvet lawn, on which no fallen leaf was allowed to lie for an hour; the pretty house behind, perfection of English comfort and daintiness; the loose morning clothes, not more than half clerical, and perfectly unpretending, yet somehow more fine, better cut and better fitting than other people's

clothes. Rose had for him that enthusiasm of admiration which a girl often entertains for a handsome and gentlemanly father, who takes the trouble to enter into her feelings, and make her his companion. I do not know any more exquisite sentiment in humanity. She loved him entirely, and he was to her a very model of everything that was most delightful, kind, tender, and beautiful. But as she looked at this model of man, his words somehow struck and vibrated upon a new chord in the girl's mind. "The struggle and wear and tear that life demands." Did Mr. Damerel have much of that "outside," as he said? He resumed his reading, but his daughter did not look again at the book of poetry which lay open on her knee. Somehow a reflection of the pucker on her mother's brow had got into her heart—her mother, whom Rose loved, but who was not an idol and model of excellence, like the gentle and graceful being at her side. The contrast struck her for perhaps the first time in her life. What was the meaning of it? Was it because Mrs. Damerel did not understand the beauty of repose, or because a woman's business in this world is more detailed and engrossing than a man's? "Fancy mamma spending the whole morning out of doors, reading poetry!" Rose said to herself, with an involuntary silent laugh over the absurdity of the notion. No doubt it was because of the difference between man and woman; one of those disabilities which people talked about; and perhaps (Rose went on philosophizing) women are wrong to absorb themselves in this way in the management of their houses, and ought to rule their domestic affairs with a lighter hand, not interfering with all the little minutiae, and making slaves of themselves. She looked towards the house as she mused, and the vague compunction which had been in her mind sharpened into something like a prick of conscience. It was delightful being out here, in the soft shade of the lime-trees, watching when she liked the flitting shadows over the plain below, and the gleam of the river here and there among the trees—reading when she liked *Balaustion's Adventure*, which was the book on her knee. The significance of the old story embedded in that book did not for the moment strike her. I think she was, on the whole, rather annoyed with Mr. Brown-ing for having brought down the story of a woman's sacrifice, all for love, into the



region of even poetic reason. To Rose, at that period of her development, it seemed the most ideal climax of life to die for the man she loved. What could be more beautiful, more satisfactory? Such an ending would reconcile one, she thought, to any suffering; it gave her heart a thrill of high sensation indescribable in words. How sweet the air was, how lovely all the lights! Rose was just enough of an artist to be able to talk about "the lights" with some faint understanding of what she meant. She was in a kind of soft Elysium, penetrated by the thousand sensations of the morning, the quiet, the flattering soft air that caressed her, the poetry, the society, the beauty all around. But then there came that sharp little prick of conscience. Perhaps she ought to go in and offer the help her mother wanted. Rose did not jump up to do this, as she would have done at once (she felt sure) had she been required to die, like Iphigenia, for her country, or, like Alcestis, for her husband. The smaller sacrifice somehow was less easy; but it disturbed her a little in the perfection of her gentle enjoyment, and dictated a few restless movements which caught her father's eye. He turned and looked at her, asking fretfully, with a look, what was the matter, for he did not like to be disturbed.

"Perhaps," said Rose, inquiringly, and appealing to him with another look, "I ought to go in and see what is wanted. Perhaps I could be of some use to mamma."

Mr. Damerel smiled. "Use?" he said. "Has your mother bitten you with her passion for use? You are not of the useful kind, take my word for it; and make yourself happy, like your namesakes, who toil not, neither do they spin."

"But perhaps—" said Rose softly to herself—her father gave her a friendly little nod and returned to his book—and she had to solve her problem without his assistance. She tried to do it, sitting on the grass, and it was a long and rather troublesome process. It would have been much more easily and briefly settled, had she gone into the schoolroom; but then I am afraid Rose did not wish it to be solved that way.

#### CHAPTER II.

MRS. DAMEREL went back into the house with a countenance much less placid than that of her husband. I scarcely know why it is that the contrast of perfect repose and enjoyment with

anxiety, work, and care should irritate the worker as it invariably does; but here indeed there was reason enough; for Mrs. Damerel felt that the two people luxuriating in total absence of care on this delightful morning ought to have taken a considerable share with her in her labours and lightened the burden she was now obliged to bear alone. This mingled a sharpness of feeling with her toils. People who interpret human nature coarsely—and they are, perhaps, the majority—would have said that Mrs. Damerel was jealous of her husband's preference for Rose's society, and this would have been a total and vulgar mistake; but she had in her mind a feeling which it is difficult to explain, which for the moment made her irritation with Rose more strong than her irritation with Rose's father. He was, in the first place, a man—grand distinction, half contemptuous, half respectful, with which women of Mrs. Damerel's age (I don't say young women often do it, at least consciously—except in the case of their fathers and brothers) account for and make up their minds to so many things. I am not attempting to account for this sentiment, which is so similar to that with which men in their turn regard women; I only acknowledge its existence. He was a man, brought up as all men are (I still quote Mrs. Damerel's thoughts, to which she seldom or never gave expression), to think of themselves first, and expect everything to give in to them. But Rose had none of these privileges. What her mother as a woman had to take upon her, Rose had an equal right to take too. Mrs. Damerel herself could not forget, though everybody else did, that she had been a Rose too, in her proper person; the time even since that miraculous period was not so far off to her as to the others; but before she was Rose's age she had been married, and had already become, to some extent, Mr. Damerel's shield and buckler against the world and its annoyances. And here was Rose growing up as if she, instead of being a woman as nature made her, was herself one of the privileged class, to whom women are the ministers. This annoyed Mrs. Damerel more, perhaps, than the facts justified; it gave her a sense of injured virtue as well as feeling. It would be the ruin of the girl—it was wrong to let her get into such ways. The mother was angry, which is always painful and aggravates everything. She was too proud to struggle with her daughter, or to exact help which was

not freely given ; for Rose was no longer a child to be sent hither and thither and directed what to do. And Mrs. Damerel was no more perfect than Rose was — she had her own difficulties of temper like other people. This was one of them — that she drew back within herself when she felt her appeal refused or even left without response. She went in with a little scorn, a little pride, a good deal of anger and more of mortification. “I must do everything myself, it appears,” she said, with a swelling of the heart which was very natural, I think. After the sun on the lawn, it was very warm indoors and the schoolroom was very noisy indeed by the time she had got rid of the applicants in the hall, one of whom (most respectful and indeed obsequious, and perfectly willing to accept her excuses, but yet a dun notwithstanding) had come to say that he had many heavy payments to make up, &c.—and if Mrs. Damerel could oblige him — ? Mrs. Damerel could not oblige him, but he was very civil and full of apologies for troubling her. I do not, by any means, intend to say that the Rector’s wife was tortured by perpetual struggling with her creditors. It was not so bad as that. The difficulty was rather to keep going, to be not too much in debt to any one, to pay soon enough to preserve her credit, and yet get as long a day as possible. Mrs. Damerel had come by long practice to have the finest intuition in such matters. She knew exactly how long a tailor or a wine merchant would wait for his money without acerbation of temper, and would seize that crowning moment to have him paid by hook or by crook. But by thus making a fine art of her bills, she added infinitely to her mental burdens — for a woman must never forget anything or neglect anything when she holds her tradespeople so very delicately in hand.

The schoolroom, as I have just said, was very noisy, not to say, uproarious, when she got back to it, and it was hard not to remember that Rose ought to have been there. There were five children in it, of various ages and sizes. The two big boys were both at Eton. The eldest, Bertie, who was bright and clever, was “on the foundation,” and therefore did not cost his parents much ; the second had his expenses paid by a relation — thus these two were off their mother’s hands. The eldest in the schoolroom was Agatha, aged fourteen, who taught the two little ones ; but who, during her mother’s absence, ought to have been

playing “her scales,” and had conscientiously tried to do so for ten minutes, at the end of which time she had been obliged to resign the music in order to rescue these same two little ones, her special charge, from the hands of Dick, aged ten, who was subjecting them to unknown tortures, which caused the babes to howl unmercifully. Patty, the next girl to Agatha, aided and abetted Dick ; and what with the laughter of these two pickles, and the screams of the small ones, and poor Agatha’s remonstrances, the scene was Pandemonium itself, and almost as hot ; for the room was on the sunny side of the house, and blazing, notwithstanding the drawn blinds. The children were all languid and irritable with the heat, hating their confinement indoors ; and, indeed, if Rose had come, she would have made a very poor exchange. Agatha’s music had tumbled down from the piano, the old red cover was half drawn off the table, and threatened at any moment a clean sweep of copybooks, ink-bottles, and slates. Dick stood among his books, all tumbled on the floor, his heels crushing the cover of one, while Patty sat upon the open dictionary, doubling down half the leaves with her weight. Such a scene for a bothered mother to come into ! Mr. Damerel himself heard some faint rumour of the noise, and his fine brow had begun to draw itself into lines, and a resolution to “speak to their mother” formed itself within his mind. Poor mother ! She could have cried when she went in out of all her other troubles ; but that was a mere momentary weakness, and the rebels were soon reduced to order, Agatha sent back to her scales, and Dick and Patty to their copybooks. “You two little ones may go,” Mrs. Damerel said, and with a shriek of delight the babies toddled out and made their way to the hayfield behind the house, where they were perfectly happy, and liable to no more danger than that of being carried off in a load of fragrant hay. When Mr. Nolan, the Curate, came in to talk about parish business, Agatha’s “scales,” not badly played, were trilling through the place, and Patty and Dick, very deep in ink, and leaning all their weight upon their respective pens, were busy with their writing ; and calm, the calm of deep awe, prevailed.

“Shall I disturb you if I come in here ?” asked the Curate, with a mellow sound in his voice which was not brogue — or at least he thought it was not, and

was ingenuously surprised when he was recognized as an Irishman. ("It will be my name, to be sure," he would say on such occasions, somewhat puzzled.) He was a bony man, loosely put together, in a long coat, with rather a wisp of a white tie; for, indeed, it was very hot and dusty on the roads, and where the rector is an elegant man of very refined mind, the curate, like the wife, has generally a good deal to do.

"Indeed the lessons have been so much disturbed as it is, that it does not much matter," said Mrs. Damerel. "On Monday morning there are so many things to call me away."

"How selfish of me!" said the Curate. "Monday morning is just the time I've little or nothing to do, except when there's sickness. What a brute I was not to offer myself,—and, indeed, that's just what I've come to speak about."

"No, no, you are too kind, and do too much already," said Mrs. Damerel, looking at him with a grateful smile, but shaking her head. "And, indeed," she added, the cloud coming over her face again, "Rose ought to come and relieve me; but her father has to be attended to, and that takes up so much of her time."

"To be sure," said the Curate cheerily, "and reason good. Besides, it would be wearing work for one like her—whereas the like o' me is made for it. Look here, Dick, my boy, will you promise to learn your lessons like a brick to-morrow if I ask the mother for a holiday to-day?"

"Oh, hurrah!" cried Dick, delighted.

"Oh, mamma, like twenty bricks," cried Patty, "though how a brick can learn lessons—. It's so hot, and one keeps thinking of the hayfield."

"Then be off wi' you all," cried the Curate. "Don't you see the mother smile? and Agatha too. I'm going to talk business. Sure you don't mind for one day?"

"Oh, mind!" said poor Mrs. Damerel, with a half smile; then waiting till they were all out of hearing, an exit speedily accomplished, "if it were not for duty, how glad I should be to give it up altogether!—but they could not go on with Miss Hunt," she added, with a quick glance at the Curate to see whether by chance he understood her. Good Curate, he could be very stolid on occasion, though I hope he was not fool enough to be taken in by Mrs. Damerel's pretences; though it was true enough that Miss Hunt was impracticable. She could not

afford a better; this was what she really meant.

From The Gentleman's Magazine.

#### RECOLLECTIONS OF JOHN KEATS.

BY CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

IN the village of Enfield, in Middlesex, ten miles on the North road from London, my father, John Clarke, kept a school. The house had been built by a West India merchant in the latter end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century. It was of the better character of the domestic architecture of that period, the whole front being of the purest red brick, wrought by means of moulds into rich designs of flowers and pomegranates, with heads of cherubim over niches in the centre of the building. The elegance of the design and the perfect finish of the structure were such as to secure its protection when a branch railway was brought from the Ware and Cambridge line to Enfield. The old school-house was converted into the station-house, and the railway company had the good taste to leave intact one of the few remaining specimens of the graceful English architecture of long-gone days.

Here it was that John Keats all but commenced, and did complete his school education. He was born on the 29th of October, 1795; and he was one of the little fellows who had not wholly emerged from the child's costume upon being placed under my father's care. It will be readily conceived that it is difficult to recall from the "dark backward and abysm" of seventy-odd years the general acts of perhaps the youngest individual in a corporation of between seventy and eighty youngsters; and very little more of Keats's child-life can I remember than that he had a brisk, winning face, and was a favourite with all, particularly my mother. His maternal grandfather, Jennings, was proprietor of a large livery-stable, called the "Swan and Hoop," on the pavement in Moorfields, opposite the entrance into Finsbury Circus. He had two sons at my father's school: the elder was an officer in Duncan's ship off Camperdown. After the battle, the Dutch Admiral, De Winter, pointing to young Jennings, told Duncan that he had fired several shots at that young man, and always missed his mark;—no credit to his steadiness of aim, for Jennings, like his own admiral, was con-

siderably above the ordinary dimensions of stature.

Keats's father was the principal servant at the Swan and Hoop stables—a man of so remarkably fine a common-sense, and native respectability, that I perfectly remember the warm terms in which his demeanour used to be canvassed by my parents after he had been to visit his boys. John was the only one resembling him in person and feature, with brown hair and dark hazel eyes. The father was killed by a fall from his horse in returning from a visit to the school. This detail may be deemed requisite when we see in the last memoir of the poet the statement that "John Keats was born on the 29th of October, 1795, in the upper rank of the middle class." His two brothers—George, older, and Thomas, younger than himself—were like the mother, who was tall, of good figure, with large oval face, and sensible deportment. The last of the family was a sister—Fanny, I think, much younger than all,—and I hope still living—of whom I remember, when once walking in the garden with her brothers, my mother speaking of her with much fondness for her pretty and simple manners. She married Mr. Llanos, a Spanish refugee, the author of "Don Esteban," and "Sandoval, the Freemason." He was a man of liberal principles, very attractive bearing, and of more than ordinary accomplishments.

In the early part of his school-life John gave no extraordinary indications of intellectual character; but it was remembered of him afterwards, that there was ever present a determined and steady spirit in all his undertakings: I never knew it misdirected in his required pursuit of study. He was a most orderly scholar. The future ramifications of that noble genius were then closely shut in the seed, which was greedily drinking in the moisture which made it afterwards burst forth so kindly into luxuriance and beauty.

My father was in the habit, at each half-year's vacation, of bestowing prizes upon those pupils who had performed the greatest quantity of voluntary work; and such was Keats's indefatigable energy for the last two or three successive half-years of his remaining at school, that, upon each occasion, he took the first prize by a considerable distance. He was at work before the first school-hour began, and that was at seven o'clock; almost all the intervening times of recreation were so devoted; and during the afternoon holidays, when all were at play, he would be

in the school—almost the only one—at his Latin or French translation; and so unconscious and regardless was he of the consequences of so close and persevering an application, that he never would have taken the necessary exercise had he not been sometimes driven out for the purpose by one of the masters.

It has just been said that he was a favourite with all. Not the less beloved was he for having a highly pugnacious spirit, which, when roused, was one of the most picturesque exhibitions—off the stage—I ever saw. One of the transports of that marvellous actor, Edmund Kean—whom, by the way, he idolized—was its nearest resemblance; and the two were not very dissimilar in face and figure. Upon one occasion, when an usher, on account of some impertinent behaviour, had boxed his brother Tom's ears, John rushed up, put himself in the received posture of offence, and, it was said, struck the usher—who could, so to say, have put him into his pocket. His passion at times was almost ungovernable; and his brother George, being considerably the taller and stronger, used frequently to hold him down by main force, laughing when John was in "one of his moods," and was endeavouring to beat him. It was all, however, a wisp-of-straw conflagration; for he had an intensely tender affection for his brothers, and proved it upon the most trying occasions. He was not merely the "favourite of all," like a pet prize-fighter, for his terrier courage; but his highmindedness, his utter unconsciousness of a mean motive, his placability, his generosity, wrought so general a feeling in his behalf, that I never heard a word of disapproval from any one, superior or equal, who had known him.

In the latter part of the time—perhaps eighteen months—that he remained at school, he occupied the hours during meals in reading. Thus, his whole time was engrossed. He had a tolerably retentive memory, and the quantity that he read was surprising. He must in those last months have exhausted the school library, which consisted principally of abridgments of all the voyages and travels of any note; Mavor's collection, also his "Universal History;" Robertson's histories of Scotland, America, and Charles the Fifth; all Miss Edgeworth's productions, together with many other works equally well calculated for youth. The books, however, that were his constantly recurring sources of attraction

were Tooke's "Pantheon," Lemprière's "Classical Dictionary," which he appeared to *learn*, and Spence's "Polymetis." This was the store whence he acquired his intimacy with the Greek mythology; here was he "suckled in that creed outworn;" for his amount of classical attainment extended no farther than the "*Æneid*;" with which epic, indeed, he was so fascinated that before leaving school he had *voluntarily* translated in writing a considerable portion. And yet I remember that at that early age — mayhap under fourteen — notwithstanding, and through all its incidental attractiveness, he hazarded the opinion to me (and the expression riveted my surprise), that there was feebleness in the structure of the work. He must have gone through all the better publications in the school library, for he asked me to lend him some of my own books; and, in my "mind's eye," I now see him at supper (we had our meals in the schoolroom), sitting back on the form, from the table, holding the folio volume of Burnet's "*History of his Own Time*" between himself and the table, eating his meal from beyond it. This work, and Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* — which my father took in, and I used to lend to Keats — no doubt laid the foundation of his love of civil and religious liberty. He once told me, smiling, that one of his guardians, being informed what books I had lent him to read, declared that if he had fifty children he would not send one of them to that school. Bless his patriot head!

When he left Enfield, at fourteen years of age, he was apprenticed to Mr. Thomas Hammond, a medical man, residing in Church Street, Edmonton, and exactly two miles from Enfield. This arrangement evidently gave him satisfaction, and I fear that it was the most placid period of his painful life; for now, with the exception of the duty he had to perform in the surgery — by no means an onerous one — his whole leisure hours were employed in indulging his passion for reading and translating. During his apprenticeship he finished the "*Æneid*."

The distance between our residences being so short, I gladly encouraged his inclination to come over when he could claim a leisure hour; and in consequence I saw him about five or six times a month on my own leisure afternoons. He rarely came empty-handed; either he had a book to read, or brought one to be exchanged. When the weather permitted, we always sat in an arbour at the end of

a spacious garden, and — in Boswellian dialect — "we had a good talk."

It were difficult, at this lapse of time, to note the spark that fired the train of his poetical tendencies; but he must have given unmistakable tokens of his mental bent; otherwise, at that early stage of his career, I never could have read to him the "*Epithalamion*" of Spenser; and this I remember having done, and in that hallowed old arbour, the scene of many bland and graceful associations — the substances having passed away. At that time he may have been sixteen years old; and at that period of life he certainly appreciated the general beauty of the composition, and felt the more passionate passages; for his features and exclamations were ecstatic. How often, in after times, have I heard him quote these lines: —

Behold, while she before the altar stands,  
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks,  
And blesses her with his two happy hands,  
How the red roses flush up to her cheeks!  
And the pure snow, with goodly vermeil stain,  
Like crimson dyed in grain,  
That even the angels, which continually  
About the sacred altar do remain,  
Forget their service, and about her fly,  
*Of peeping in her face, that seems more fair,*  
*The more they on it stare;*  
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,  
Are govern'd with goodly modesty,  
That suffers not one look to glance awry,  
Which may let in a little thought unsound.

That night he took away with him the first volume of the "*Faerie Queene*," and he went through it, as I formerly told his noble biographer, "as a young horse would through a spring meadow — ramping!" Like a true poet too — a poet "born, not manufactured," a poet in grain, he especially singled out epithets, for that felicity and power in which Spenser is so eminent. He *hoisted* himself up, and looked burly and dominant, as he said, "What an image that is — '*sea-shouldering whales*!' " It was a treat to see as well as hear him read a pathetic passage. Once when reading the "*Cymbeline*" aloud, I saw his eyes fill with tears, and his voice faltered when he came to the departure of Posthumus, and Imogen saying she would have watched him —

'Till the diminution  
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;  
Nay, follow'd him till he had *melted from*  
*The smallness of a gnat to air*; and then  
Have turn'd mine eye and wept.

I cannot reconcile the precise time of our separating at this stage of Keats's



career—who first went to London; but it was upon an occasion, that walking thither to see Leigh Hunt, who had just fulfilled his penalty of confinement in Horsemonger Lane Prison for the unwise libel upon the Prince Regent, that Keats met me; and, turning, accompanied me back part of the way. At the last field-gate, when taking leave, he gave me the sonnet entitled, "Written on the Day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison." This I feel to be the first proof I had received of his having committed himself in verse; and how clearly do I recall the conscious look and hesitation with which he offered it! There are some momentary glances by beloved friends that fade only with life. His biographer has stated that "The Lines in Imitation of Spencer"—

Now Morning from her orient chamber came,  
And her first footsteps touch'd a verdant hill,  
&c.,

are the earliest known verses of his composition; a probable circumstance, from their subject being the inspiration of his first love, in poetry—and such a love!—but Keats's first *published* poem was the sonnet:—

O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell,  
Let it not be among the jumbled heap  
Of murky buildings; climb with me the steep—  
Nature's observatory—whence the dell,  
In flowery slopes, its river's crystal swell  
May seem a span; let me thy vigils keep  
'Mongst boughs pavilion'd, where the deer's  
swift leap  
Startles the wild bee from the foxglove bell.  
But though I'll gladly trace these scenes  
with thee,  
Yet the sweet converse of an innocent mind,  
Whose words are images of thoughts refined,  
Is my soul's pleasure; and it sure must be  
Almost the highest bliss of human kind,  
When to thy haunts two kindred spirits flee.

This sonnet appeared in the *Examiner* some time, I think, in 1816.

When we both had come to London—Keats to enter as a student of St. Thomas's Hospital—he was not long in discovering my abode, which was with a brother-in-law in Clerkenwell; and at that time being house-keeper, and solitary, he would come and renew his loved gossip; till, as the author of the "Urn Burial" says, "we were acting our antipodes—the huntsmen were up in America, and they already were past their first sleep in Persia." At the close of a letter which preceded my appointing him to come and lighten my darkness in Clerk-

enwell, is his first address upon coming to London. He says:—"Although the Borough is a beastly place in dirt, turnings, and windings, yet No. 8, Dean Street, is not difficult to find; and if you would run the gauntlet over London Bridge, take the first turning to the right, and, moreover, knock at my door, which is nearly opposite a meeting, you would do me a charity, which, as St. Paul saith, is the father of all the virtues. At all events, let me hear from you soon: I say, at all events, not excepting the gout in your fingers." This letter, having no date but the week's day, and no postmark, preceded our first symposium; and a memorable night it was in my life's career.

A beautiful copy of the folio edition of Chapman's translation of Homer had been lent me. It was the property of Mr. Alsager, the gentleman who for years had contributed no small share of celebrity to the great reputation of the *Times* newspaper by the masterly manner in which he conducted the money market department of that journal. Upon my first introduction to Mr. Alsager he lived opposite to Horsemonger Lane Prison, and upon Mr. Leigh Hunt's being sentenced for the libel, his first day's dinner was sent over by Mr. Alsager.

Well, then, we were put in possession of the Homer of Chapman, and to work we went, turning to some of the "famous-est" passages, as we had scrappily known them in Pope's version. There was, for instance, that perfect scene of the conversation on Troy wall of the old Senators with Helen, who is pointing out to them the several Greek captains; with the Senator Antenor's vivid portrait of an orator in Ulysses, beginning at the 237th line of the third book:—

But when the prudent Ithacus did to his  
counsels rise,  
He stood a little still, and fix'd upon the  
earth his eyes,  
His sceptre moving neither way, but held it  
formally,  
Like one that vainly doth affect. Of wrathful  
quality,  
And frantic (rashly judging), you would have  
said he was;  
But when out of his ample breast he gave his  
great voice pass,  
And words that flew about our ears like drifts  
of winter's snow,  
None thenceforth might contend with him,  
though naught admir'd for show.

The shield and helmet of Diomed, with the accompanying simile, in the opening of the third book; and the prodigious

description of Neptune's passage to the Achæe ships, in the thirteenth book : —  
 The woods and all the great hills near trembled  
 beneath the weight  
 Of his immortal-moving feet. Three steps he  
 only took,  
 Before he far-off Ægeas reach'd, but with the  
 fourth, it shook  
 With his dread entry.

One scene I could not fail to introduce to him — the shipwreck of Ulysses, in the fifth book of the "Odysseis," and I had the reward of one of his delighted stares, upon reading the following lines :

Then forth he came, his both knees falt'ring,  
 both  
 His strong hands hanging down, and all with  
 froth  
 His cheeks and nostrils flowing, voice and  
 breath  
 Spent to all use, and down he sank to death.  
*The sea had soak'd his heart through ; all his*  
*veins*  
 His toils had rack'd t' a labouring woman's  
 pains,  
 Dead-weary was he.

On an after occasion I showed him the couplet, in Pope's translation, upon the same passage : —

From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran,  
 And *lost in lassitude lay all the man.* [!!!]

Chapman\* supplied us with many an after-treat ; but it was in the teeming wonderment of this his first introduction, that, when I came down to breakfast the next morning, I found upon my table a letter with no other enclosure than his famous sonnet, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." We had parted, as I have already said, at day-spring, yet he contrived that I should receive the poem from a distance of, may be, two miles, by ten o'clock. In the published copy of this sonnet he made an alteration in the seventh line : —

Yet did I never breathe its pure serene.  
 The original which he sent me had the phrase —

Yet could I never tell what men could mean ;  
 which he said was bald, and too simply wondering. No one could more earnestly chastise his thoughts than Keats. His favourite among Chapman's "Hymns of Homer" was the one to Pan, which he himself rivalled in the "Endymion" : —

O thou whose mighty palace-roof doth hang,  
 &c.

\* With what joy would Keats have welcomed Mr. Richard Hooper's admirable edition of our old version !

It appears early in the first book of the poem ; the first line in which has passed into a proverb, and become a motto to Exhibition catalogues of Fine Art : —

A thing of beauty is a joy forever :  
 Its loveliness increases ; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
 Full of sweet dreams, &c.

The "Hymn to Pan" alone should have rescued this young and vigorous poem — this youngest epic — from the savage injustice with which it was assailed.

In one of our conversations, about this period, I alluded to his position at St. Thomas's Hospital, coasting and reconnoitring, as it were, for the purpose of discovering what progress he was making in his profession ; which I had taken for granted had been his own selection, and not one chosen for him. The total absorption, therefore, of every other mood of his mind than that of imaginative composition, which had now evidently encompassed him, induced me, from a kind motive, to inquire what was his bias of action for the future ; and with that transparent candour which formed the main-spring of his rule of conduct, he at once made no secret of his inability to sympathize with the science of anatomy, as a main pursuit in life ; for one of the expressions that he used, in describing his unfitness for its mastery, was perfectly characteristic. He said, in illustration of his argument, "The other day, for instance, during the lecture, there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray ; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairyland." And yet, with all his self-styled unfitness for the pursuit, I was afterwards informed that at his subsequent examination he displayed an amount of acquirement which surprised his fellow students, who had scarcely any other association with him than that of a cheerful, crotchety rhymester. He once talked with me, upon my complaining of stomachic derangement, with a remarkable decision of opinion, describing the functions and actions of the organ with the clearness and, as I presume, technical precision of an adult practitioner ; casually illustrating the comment, in his characteristic way, with poetical imagery : the stomach, he said, being like a brood of callow nestlings (opening his capacious mouth) yearning and gaping for sustenance ; and, indeed, he merely exempli-

fied what should be, if possible, the "stock in trade" of every poet, viz., to *know* all that is to be known, "in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth."

It was about this period that, going to call upon Mr. Leigh Hunt, who then occupied a pretty cottage in the Vale of Health, on Hampstead Heath, I took with me two or three of the poems I had received from Keats. I could not but anticipate that Hunt would speak encouragingly, and indeed approvingly, of the compositions — written, too, by a youth under age; but my partial spirit was not prepared for the unhesitating and prompt admiration which broke forth before he had read twenty lines of the first poem. Horace Smith happened to be there on the occasion, and he was not less demonstrative in his appreciation of their merits. The piece which he read out was the sonnet, "How many Bards gild the Lapses of Time!" marking with particular emphasis and approval the last six lines:—

So the unnumber'd sounds that evening store,  
The songs of birds, the whisp'ring of the leaves,

The voice of waters, the great bell that heaves

With solemn sound, and thousand others more,  
*That distance of recognisance bereaves,*  
Make pleasing music, and not wild uproar.

Smith repeated with applause the line in italics, saying, "What a well-condensed expression for a youth so young!" After making numerous and eager inquiries about him, personally, and with reference to any peculiarities of mind and manner, the visit ended in my being requested to bring him over to the Vale of Health.

That was a "red-letter day" in the young poet's life, and one which will never fade with me while memory lasts.

The character and expression of Keats's features would arrest even the casual passenger in the street; and now they were wrought to a tone of animation that I could not but watch with interest, knowing what was in store for him from the bland encouragement, and Spartan deference in attention, with fascinating conversational eloquence, that he was to encounter and receive. As we approached the Heath, there was the rising and accelerated step, with the gradual subsidence of all talk. The interview, which stretched into three "morning calls," was the prelude to many after-scenes and saunterings about Caen Wood and its

neighbourhood; for Keats was suddenly made a familiar of the household, and was always welcomed.

It was in the library at Hunt's cottage, where an extemporary bed had been made up for him on the sofa, that he composed the frame-work and many lines of the poem on "Sleep and Poetry"—the last sixty or seventy being an inventory of the art garniture of the room, commencing:—

It was a poet's house who keeps the keys  
Of Pleasure's temple. . . .

In this composition is the lovely and favourite little cluster of images upon the fleeting transit of life—a pathetic anticipation of his own brief career:—

Stop and consider! Life is but a day;  
A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way  
From a tree's summit; a poor Indian's sleep  
While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep  
Of Montmorenci. Why so sad a moan?  
Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;  
The reading of an ever-changing tale;  
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;  
A pigeon tumbling in the summer air;  
A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,  
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

Very shortly after his installation at the cottage, and on the day after one of our visits, he gave in the following sonnet, a characteristic appreciation of the spirit in which he had been received:—

Keen fitful gusts are whispering here and there  
Among the bushes half leafless and dry;

The stars look very cold about the sky,  
And I have many miles on foot to fare;  
Yet I feel little of the cool bleak air,  
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,  
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,  
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:  
For I am brimful of the friendliness

That in a little cottage I have found;  
Of fair-hair'd Milton's eloquent distress,  
And all his love for gentle Lycid' drown'd;  
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,  
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crown'd.

The glowing sonnet upon being compelled to "Leave Friends at an Early Hour"—

Give me a golden pen and let me lean, &c., followed shortly after the former. But the occasion that recurs with the liveliest interest was one evening when—some observations having been made upon the character, habits, and pleasant associations with that reverend denizen of the hearth, the cheeful little grasshopper of the fireside—Hunt proposed to Keats the challenge of writing then, there, and

to time, a sonnet "On the Grasshopper and Cricket." No one was present but myself, and they accordingly set to. I, apart, with a book at the end of the sofa, could not avoid furtive glances every now and then at the emulants. I cannot say how long the trial lasted. I was not proposed umpire; and had no stopwatch for the occasion. The time, however, was short for such a performance, and Keats won as to time. But the event of the after scrutiny was one of many such occurrences which have riveted the memory of Leigh Hunt in my affectionate regard and admiration for unaffected generosity and perfectly unpretentious encouragement. His sincere look of pleasure at the first line —

The poetry of earth is never dead.

"Such a prosperous opening!" he said; and when he came to the tenth and eleventh lines: —

On a lone winter evening, *when the frost  
Has wrought a silence* —

"Ah! that's perfect! Bravo Keats!" And then he went on in a dilation upon the dumbness of Nature during the season's suspension and torpidity. With all the kind and gratifying things that were said to him, Keats protested to me, as we were afterwards walking home, that he preferred Hunt's treatment of the subject to his own. As neighbour Dogberry would have rejoined: "'Fore God, they are both in a tale!" It has occurred to me, upon so remarkable an occasion as the one here recorded, that a reunion of the two sonnets will be gladly hailed by the reader.

#### ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET.

The poetry of earth is never dead:

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,

And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;

That is the Grasshopper's, — he takes the lead  
In summer luxury, — he has never done

With his delights, for when tired out with fun

He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.

The poetry of earth is ceasing never;

On a lone winter evening, when the frost  
Has wrought a silence; from the stove there  
thrills

The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,  
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,

The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.  
Dec. 30, 1816. JOHN KEATS.

#### ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET.

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass

Catching your heart up at the feel of June,  
Sole voice that's heard amidst the hazy  
noon,

When ev'n the bees lag at the summoning  
brass;

And you, warm little housekeeper, who class

With those who think the candles come too  
soon,

Loving the fire, and with your tricksome  
tune

Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;

Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,

One to the fields, the other to the hearth,  
Both have your sunshine; both though small  
are strong

At your clear hearts; and both were sent on  
earth

To sing in thoughtful ears this natural song, —  
In doors and out, Summer and Winter, Mirth!  
Dec. 30, 1816. LEIGH HUNT.

Keats had left the neighbourhood of the Borough, and was now living with his brothers in apartments on the second floor of a house in the Poultry, over the passage leading to the Queen's Head Tavern, and opposite to one of the City Companies' halls — the Ironmongers', if I mistake not. I have the associating reminiscence of many happy hours spent in this abode. Here was determined upon, in great part written, and sent forth to the world, the first little, but vigorous offspring of his brain: —

#### POEMS

By

JOHN KEATS.

"What more felicity can fall to creature  
Than to enjoy delight with liberty!"

*Fate of the Butterfly.* — Spenser.

London:

Printed for C. and J. Ollier,  
3, Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square.  
1817.

And here, on the evening when the last proof-sheet was brought from the printer, it was accompanied by the information that if a "dedication to the book was intended it must be sent forthwith." Whereupon he withdrew to a side table, and in the buzz of a mixed conversation (for there were several friends in the room) he composed and brought to Charles Ollier, the publisher, the Dedication Sonnet to Leigh Hunt. If the original manuscript of that poem — a legitimate sonnet, with every restriction of rhyme and metre — could now be produced, and the time recorded in which it was written, it would be pronounced an extraordinary performance: added to which the non-alteration

of a single word in the poem (a circumstance that was noted at the time) claims for it a merit with a very rare parallel. The remark may be here subjoined that, had the composition been previously prepared for the occasion, the mere writing it out would have occupied fourteen minutes; and lastly, when I refer to the time occupied in composing the sonnet on "The Grasshopper and the Cricket," I can have no hesitation in believing the one in question to have been extempore.

"The poem which commences the volume," says Lord Houghton in his first memoir of the poet, "was suggested to Keats by a delightful summer's day, as he stood beside the gate that leads from the battery on Hampstead Heath into a field by Caen Wood;" and the following lovely passage he himself told me was the recollection of our having frequently loitered over the rail of a foot-bridge that spanned (probably still spans, notwithstanding the intrusive and shouldering railroad) a little brook in the last field upon entering Edmonton:—

Linger awhile upon some bending planks  
That lean against a streamlet's rushy banks,  
And watch intently Nature's gentle doings;  
They will be found softer than ring-dove's  
cooings.

How silent comes the water round that bend!  
Not the minutest whisper does it send  
To the o'er-hanging willows; blades of grass  
Slowly across the chequer'd shadows pass.  
Why, you might read two sonnets, ere they  
reach

To where the hurrying freshnesses aye preach  
A natural sermon o'er their pebbly beds;  
Where swarms of minnows show their little  
heads,

*Slaying their wavy bodies 'gainst the streams,  
To taste the luxury of sunny beams  
Temper'd with coolness. How they wrestle  
With their own delight, and ever nestle  
Their silver bellies on the pebbly sand!  
If you but scantily hold out the hand,  
That very instant not one will remain;  
But turn your eye and they are there again.*

He himself thought the picture correct, and acknowledged to a partiality for it.

Another example of his promptly suggestive imagination, and uncommon facility in giving it utterance, occurred one day upon returning home and finding me asleep on the sofa, with a volume of Chaucer open at the "Flower and the Leaf." After expressing to me his admiration of the poem, which he had been reading, he gave me the fine testimony of that opinion in pointing to the sonnet he had written at the close of it, which was an extempore effusion, and without the

alteration of a single word. It lies before me now, signed "J. K., Feb., 1817." If my memory do not betray me, this charming out-door fancy-scene was Keats's first introduction to Chaucer. The "Troilus and Cresseide" was certainly an after-acquaintance with him; and clearly do I recall his approbation of the favourite passages that had been marked in my own copy. Upon being requested, he re-traced the poem, and with his pen confirmed and denoted those which were congenial with his own feeling and judgment. These two circumstances, associated with the literary career of this cherished object of his friends' esteem and love, have stamped a priceless value upon that friend's miniature 18mo copy of Chaucer.

The first volume of Keats's minor muse was launched amid the cheers and fond anticipations of all his circle. Every one of us expected (and not unreasonably) that it would create a sensation in the literary world; for such a first production (and a considerable portion of it from a minor) has rarely occurred. The three Epistles and the seventeen sonnets (that upon "first looking into Chapman's Homer" one of them) would have ensured a rousing welcome from our modern-day reviewers. Alas! the book might have emerged in Timbuctoo with far stronger chance of fame and approbation. It never passed to a second edition; the first was but a small one, and that was never sold off. The whole community, as if by compact, seemed determined to know nothing about it. The word had been passed that its author was a Radical; and in those days of "Bible-Crown-and-Constitution" supremacy, he might have had better chance of success had he been an Anti-Jacobin. Keats had not made the slightest demonstration of political opinions; but with a conscious feeling of gratitude for kindly encouragement, he had dedicated his book to Leigh Hunt, Editor of the *Examiner*, a Radical and a dubbed partisan of the first Napoleon; because, when alluding to him, Hunt did not always subjoin the fashionable cognomen of "Corsican Monster." Such an association was motive enough with the dictators of that day to thwart the endeavours of a young aspirant who should presume to assert for himself an unrestricted course of opinion. Verily, "the former times were *not* better than these." Men may now utter a word in favour of "civil liberty" without being chalked on the back and hounded out.



Poor Keats ! he little anticipated, and as little merited, the cowardly treatment that was in store for him upon the publishing of his second composition — the "Endymion." It was in the interval of the two productions that he had moved from the Poultry, and had taken a lodging in Well Walk, Hampstead — in the first or second house on the right hand, going up to the Heath. I have an impression that he had been some weeks absent at the seaside before settling in this district ; for the "Endymion" had been begun, and he had made considerable advances in his plan. He came to me one Sunday, and we passed the greater part of the day walking in the neighbourhood. His constant and enviable friend, Severn, I remember, was present upon the occasion, by a little circumstance of our exchanging looks upon Keats reading to us portions of his new poem with which he himself had been pleased ; and never will his expression of face depart from me ; if I were a Reynolds or a Gainsborough I could now stamp it forever. One of his selections was the *now* celebrated "Hymn to Pan" in the first book : —

O thou whose mighty palace-roof doth hang  
From jagged roofs ;

which alone ought to have preserved the poem from unkindness ; and which would have received an awarding smile from the "deep-brow'd" himself. And the other selections were the descriptions in the second book of the "bower of Adonis," and the ascent and descent of the silver car of Venus, air-borne : —

Whose silent wheels, fresh wet from clouds of morn,  
Spun off a drizzling dew.

Keats was indebted for his introduction to Mr. Severn to his schoolfellow Edward Holmes, who also had been one of the child-scholars at Enfield ; for he came there in the frock-dress.

Holmes ought to have been an educated musician from his first childhood, for the passion was in him. I used to amuse myself with the pianoforte after supper, when all had gone to bed. Upon some sudden occasion, leaving the parlour, I heard a scuffle on the stairs, and discovered that my young gentleman had left his bed to hear the music. At other times, during the day, in the intervals of school-hours, he would stand under the window listening. At length he entrusted to me his heart's secret, that he should like to learn

music ; when I taught him his tonic alphabet, and he soon knew and could do as much as his tutor. Upon leaving school, he was apprenticed to the elder Seeley, the bookseller ; but, disliking his occupation, he left it, I think, before he was of age. He did not lose sight of his old master, and I introduced him to Mr. Vincent Novello, who had made himself a friend to me ; and who, not merely with rare profusion of bounty gave Holmes instruction, but received him into his house and made him one of his family. With them he resided some years. I was also the fortunate means of recommending him to the chief proprietor of the *Atlas* newspaper ; and to that journal, during a long period, he contributed a series of essays and critiques upon the science and practice of music, which raised the journal into a reference and an authority in the art. He wrote for the proprietors of the *Atlas* an elegant little book of dilettante criticism, "A Ramble among the Musicians in Germany." And in the latter period of his career he contributed to the *Musical Times* a whole series of masterly essays and analyses upon the masses of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. His own favourite production was a "Life of Mozart," in which he performed his task with considerable skill and equal modesty, contriving by means of the great musician's own letters to convert the work into an autobiography.

I have said that Holmes used to listen on the stairs. In after years, when Keats was reading to me the manuscript of "The Eve of St. Agnes," upon the repeating of the passage when Porphyro is listening to the midnight music in the hall below : —

The boisterous midnight festive clarion,  
The kettle-drum and far-heard clarionet,  
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :  
*The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone ; —*

"that line," said he, "came into my head when I remembered how I used to listen in bed to your music at school." How enchanting would be a record of the germs and first causes of all the greatest artists' conceptions ! The elder Brunel's first hint for his "shield" in constructing the tunnel under the Thames was taken from watching the labour of a sea-insect, which, having a projecting hood, could bore into the ship's timber unmolested by the waves.

It may have been about this time that Keats gave a signal example of his cour-

age and stamina, in the recorded instance of his pugilistic contest with a butcher-boy. He told me, and in his characteristic manner, of their "passage of arms." The brute, he said, was tormenting a kitten, and he interfered; when a threat offered was enough for his mettle, and they "set to." He thought he should be beaten, for the fellow was the taller and stronger; but like an authentic pugilist, my young poet found that he had planted a blow which "told" upon his antagonist; in every succeeding round, therefore (for they fought nearly an hour), he never failed of returning to the weak point, and the contest ended in the hulk being led home.

In my knowledge of fellow beings, I never knew one who so thoroughly combined the sweetness with the power of gentleness, and the irresistible sway of anger, as Keats. His indignation would have made the boldest grave; and they who had seen him under the influence of injustice and meanness of soul would not forget the expression of his features — "the form of his visage was changed." Upon one occasion, when some local tyranny was being discussed, he amused the party by shouting, "Why is there not a human dust-hole into which to tumble such fellows?"

Keats had a strong sense of humour, although he was not, in the strict sense of the term, a humourist, still less a farcist. His comic fancy lurked in the outermost and most unlooked-for images of association; which, indeed, may be said to form the components of humour; nevertheless, they did not extend beyond the *quaint* in fulfilment and success. But his perception of humour, with the power of transmitting it by imitation, was both vivid and irresistibly amusing. He once described to me his having gone to see a bear-baiting, the animal the property of a Mr. Tom Oliver. The performance not having begun, Keats was near to, and watched, a young aspirant, who had brought a younger under his wing to witness the solemnity, and whom he oppressively patronized, instructing him in the names and qualities of all the magistrates present. Now and then, in his zeal to manifest and impart his knowledge, he would forget himself, and stray beyond the prescribed bounds into the ring, to the lashing resentment of its comptroller, Mr. William Soames, who, after some hints of a practical nature to "keep back," began laying about him with indiscriminate and unmitigable vivacity, the Peri-

patetic signifying to his pupil, "My eyes! Bill Soames giv' me sich a lick!" evidently grateful, and considering himself complimented upon being included in the general dispensation. Keats's entertainment with and appreciation of this minor scene of low life has often recurred to me. But his concurrent personification of the baiting, with his position — his legs and arms bent and shortened till he looked like Bruin on his hind legs, dabbing his forepaws hither and thither, as the dogs snapped at him, and now and then acting the gasp of one that had been suddenly caught and hugged — his own capacious mouth adding force to the personation, was a remarkable and as memorable a display. I am never reminded of this amusing relation but it is associated with that forcible picture in Shakespeare, in "Henry VI.": —

... As a bear encompass'd round with dogs,  
Who having *pinch'd* a few and *made them cry*,  
The rest stand all aloof and bark at him.

Keats also attended a prize-fight between the two most skilful "light weights" of the day, Randal and Turner; and in describing the rapidity of the blows of the one, while the other was falling, he tapped his fingers on the window pane.

I make no apology for recording these events in his life; they are characteristics of the natural man, and prove, moreover, that the partaking in such exhibitions did not for one moment blunt the gentler emotions of his heart, or vulgarize his inborn love of all that was beautiful and true. He would never have been a "slang gent," because he had other and better accomplishments to make him conspicuous. His own line was the axiom of his moral existence, his civil creed: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," and I can fancy no coarser association able to win him from his faith. Had he been born in squalor he would have emerged a gentleman. Keats was not an easily swayable man; in differing with those he loved his firmness kept equal pace with the sweetness of his persuasion, but with the rough and the unlovable he kept no terms — within the conventional precincts, of course, of social order.

From Well Walk he moved to another quarter of the Heath, Wentworth Place, I think, the name. Here he became a sharing inmate with Charles Armitage Brown, a retired Russia merchant upon an independence and literary leisure.

With this introduction their acquaintance commenced, and Keats never had a more zealous, a firmer, or more practical friend and adviser than Armitage Brown. Mr. Brown brought out a work entitled, "Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems. Being his Sonnets clearly developed; with his Character drawn chiefly from his Works." It cannot be said that the author has clearly educed his theory; but, in the face of his failure upon the main point, the book is interesting for the heart-whole zeal and homage with which he has gone into his subject. Brown accompanied Keats in his tour in the Hebrides, a worthy event in the poet's career, seeing that it led to the production of that magnificent sonnet to "Ailsa Rock." As a passing observation, and to show how the minutest circumstance did not escape him, he told me that when he first came upon the view of Loch Lomond the sun was setting, the lake was in shade, and of a deep blue, and at the further end was "a slash across it of deep orange." The description of the traceried window in the "Eve of St. Agnes," gives proof of the intensity of his feeling for colour.

It was during his abode in Wentworth Place, that unsurpassedly savage attacks upon the "Endymion" appeared in some of the principal reviews — savage attacks, and *personally* abusive; and which would damage the sale of any magazine in the present day.

The style of the articles directed against the writers whom the party had nicknamed the "Cockney School" of poetry, may be conceived from its producing the following speech I heard from Hazlitt: "To pay those fellows in *their own coin* the way would be to begin with Walter Scott, and *have at his clump foot*." "Verily the former times were not better than these."

To say that these disgusting misrepresentations did not affect the consciousness and self-respect of Keats would be to underrate the sensitiveness of his nature. He did feel and resent the insult, but far more the *injustice* of the treatment he had received; and he told me so. They no doubt had injured him in the most wanton manner; but if they, or my Lord Byron, ever for one moment supposed that he was crushed or even cowed in spirit by the treatment he had received, never were they more deluded. "Snuffed out by an article," indeed! He had infinitely more magnanimity, in its fullest sense, than that very spoiled,

self-willed, and mean-souled man — and I have unquestionable authority for the last term. To say nothing of personal and private transactions, Lord Houghton's observations, in his life of our poet, will be full authority for my estimate of Lord Byron. "Johnny Keats" had indeed "a little body with a mighty heart," and he showed it in the best way; not by fighting the "bush-rangers" in their own style — though he could have done that — but by the resolve that he would produce brain work which not one of their party could exceed; and he did, for in the year 1820 appeared the "Lamia," "Isabella," "Eve of St. Agnes," and the "Hyperion" — that illustrious fragment, which Shelley said "had the character of one of the antique desert fragments;" which Leigh Hunt called a "gigantic fragment, like a ruin in the desert, or the bones of the Mastodon;" and Lord Byron confessed that "it seemed actually inspired by the Titans, and as sublime as *Æschylus*."

All this wonderful work was produced in scarcely more than one year, manifesting — with health — what his brain could achieve; but, alas! the insidious disease which carried him off had made its approach, and he was preparing to go to, or had already departed for, Italy, attended by his constant and self-sacrificing friend Severn. Keats's mother died of consumption; and he nursed his younger brother, in the same disease, to the last; and, by so doing, in all probability hastened his own summons.

Upon the publication of the last volume of poems, Charles Lamb wrote one of his finely appreciative and cordial critiques in the *Morning Chronicle*. At that period I had been absent for some weeks from London, and had not heard of the dangerous state of Keats's health; only that he and Severn were going to Italy; it was, therefore, an unprepared-for shock which brought me the news of his death in Rome.

Lord Houghton, in his 1848 and first "Biography of Keats," has related the anecdote of the young poet's introduction to Wordsworth, with the latter's appreciation of the "Hymn to Pan" (in the "Endymion"), which the author had been desired to repeat, and the Rydal-Mount poet's snow-capped comment upon it — "H'm! a pretty piece of Paganism!" The lordly biographer, with his genial and placable nature, has made an amiable apology for the apparent coldness of Wordsworth's appreciation: — "That it

was probably intended for some slight rebuke to his youthful compeer, whom he saw absorbed in an order of ideas that to him appeared merely sensuous, and would have desired that the bright traits of Greek mythology should be sobered down by a graver faith." Keats, like Shakespeare, and every other real poet, put his whole soul into what he had imagined, portrayed, or embodied; and hence he appeared the true young Greek. The wonder is that Wordsworth should have forgotten the quotation that might have been made from one of his own deservedly illustrious sonnets:—

The world is too much with us.  
... Great God! I'd rather be  
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

From Keats's description of his mentor's manner, as well as behaviour that evening, it would seem to have been one of the usual ebullitions of egotism, not to say of the uneasiness known to those who were accustomed to hear the great moral philosopher discourse upon his own productions, and descant upon those of a contemporary. During that same interview, some one having observed that the next Waverley novel was to be "Rob Roy," Wordsworth took down his volume of Ballads, and read to the company "Rob Roy's Grave;" then, returning it to the shelf, observed—"I do not know what more Mr. Scott can have to say upon the subject." Leigh Hunt, upon his first interview with Wordsworth, described his having lectured very finely upon his own writings, repeating the entire noble sonnet, "Great men have been among us"—"in a grand and earnest tone:" that rogue, Christopher North, added, "Catch him repeating any other than his own." Upon another and similar occasion, one of the party had quoted that celebrated passage from the play of "Henry V.," "So work the honey-bees;" and each proceeded to pick out his "pet plum" from that perfect piece of natural history; when Wordsworth objected to the line, "The singing masons building roofs of gold," because, he said, of the unpleasant repetition of "*ing*" in it! Why, where were his poetical ears and judgment? But more than once it has been said that Wordsworth had not a genuine love of Shakespeare: that, when

he could, he always accompanied a "*pro*" with his "*con.*," and, Atticus-like, would "just hint a fault and hesitate dislike." Mr. James T. Fields, in his delightful volume of "Yesterdays with Authors," has an amiable record of his interview with Wordsworth; yet he has the following casual remark, "I thought he did not praise easily those whose names are indissolubly connected with his own in the history of literature. It was languid praise, at least, and I observed he hesitated for mild terms which he could apply to names almost as great as his own." Even Crabb Robinson more than once mildly hints at the same infirmity. "Truly are we *all* of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."

I can scarcely conceive of anything more unjust than the account which that ill-ordered being, Haydon, the artist, left behind him in his "Diary" respecting the idolized object of his former intimacy, John Keats. After having read the manuscript specimens that I had left with Leigh Hunt at Haydon's own request, I introduced their author to him; and for some time subsequently I had perpetual opportunities of seeing them together, and I can testify to the laudations that Haydon trowelled on the young poet. Before I left London, however, it had been said that things and opinions had changed; and, in short, that having paid a certain visit to Edinburgh, Haydon had abjured all acquaintance with Leigh Hunt (the man who all but introduced him to the public in the *Examiner*, and whom I have heard him gaud with adulation); and, moreover, that he had even ignored such a person as the author of Sonnets XIII. and XIV., "To Haydon." I make no allusion to the grounds of their separation—having heard no word from either party; but, knowing the two men, and knowing, I believe, to the core the humane principle of the poet, I have such faith in his steadfastness of friendship that I am sure *he* would never have left behind him even an unfavourable *truth*; while nothing would have induced him to utter a *calumny*, especially of one who had received pledges of his former affectionate regard and esteem. Haydon's detraction was the more odious because its object could not contradict the charge, and because it supplied his old critical antagonists (if any remained) with an authority for their charge against him of Cockney ostentation and display. The most mean-spirited and trumpery twaddle in the paragraph was, that Keats was so



far gone in sensual excitement as to put Cayenne pepper upon his tongue when taking his claret! In the first place, if the stupid trick ever were played, I have not the slightest belief in its serious sincerity. During my knowledge of him Keats never purchased a bottle of claret; and, from such observation as could not escape me, I am bound to assert that his domestic expenses never would have occasioned him a regret or a self-reproof; and, lastly, I never perceived in him even a tendency to imprudent indulgence.

In recurring, after a lapse of so many years, to the above odious act of ingratitude in Haydon, I cannot but feel glad that the record of the *scandal*\* did not reach me during the life of its promulgator; as I might have given way to a natural if a non-magnanimous impulse of reprisal.

When Shelley left England for Italy Keats told me that he had received from him an invitation to become his guest, and, in short, to make one of his household. It was upon the purest principle that Keats declined his noble proffer, for he entertained an exalted opinion of Shelley's genius—in itself an inducement; he also knew of his deeds of bounty, and, from their frequent social intercourse, he had full faith in the sincerity of his proposal; for a more crystalline heart than Shelley's has rarely throbbed in human bosom. He was incapable of an untruth, or of deceit in any form. Keats said that in declining the invitation his sole motive was the consciousness, which would be ever prevalent with him, of his being, in its utter extent, not a free agent, even within such a circle as Shelley's—he himself, nevertheless, being the most unrestricted of beings. Mr. Trelawney, a familiar of the family, has confirmed the unwavering testimony to Shelley's bounty of nature. where he says,—“Shelley was a being absolutely without selfishness.” The poorest cottagers knew and benefited by his thoroughly *practical* and unselfish nature during his residence at Marlow, when

he would visit them, and, having gone through a course of medical study in order that he might assist them with advice, would commonly administer the tonic, which such systems usually require, of a good basin of broth or pea-soup. And I believe that I am infringing on no private domestic delicacy when repeating that he has been known upon an immediate urgency to purloin—“*Convey* the wise it call”—a portion of the warmest of Mrs. Shelley's wardrobe to protect some poor starving sister. One of the richer residents of Marlow told me that “they all considered him a madman.” I wish he had bitten the whole squad.

No settled senses of the world can match  
The “wisdom” of that madness.

Shelley's figure was a little above the middle height, slender, and of delicate construction, which appeared the rather from a lounging or waving manner in his gait, as though his frame was compounded barely of muscle and tendon; and that the power of walking was an achievement with him and not a natural habit. Yet I should suppose that he was not a valetudinarian, although that has been said of him on account of his spare and vegetable diet: for I have the remembrance of his scampering and bounding over the gorse-bushes on Hampstead Heath late one night,—now close upon us, and now shouting from the height like a wild school-boy. He was both an active and an enduring walker—feats which do not accompany an ailing and feeble constitution. His face was round, flat, pale, with small features; mouth beautifully shaped; hair bright brown and wavy; and such a pair of eyes as are rarely in the human or any other head,—intensely blue, with a gentle and lambent expression, yet wonderfully alert and engrossing; nothing appeared to escape his knowledge.

Whatever peculiarity there might have been in Shelley's religious faith, I have the best authority for believing that it was confined to the early period of his life. The *practical* result of its course of *action*, I am sure, had its source from the “Sermon on the Mount.” There is not one clause in that Divine code which his conduct towards his fellow mortals did not confirm and substantiate him to be—in action a follower of Christ. Yet, when the news arrived in London of the death of Shelley and Captain Williams by drowning near Spezzia, an evening journal of that day capped the intelligence

\* I am reminded upon this occasion, and have exquisite pleasure in aptly quoting the following passage from the recent production of the author of “*Friends in Council*,” “*Animals and their Masters*,” p. 25:—“Some girls were asked by one of our inspectors of schools, at a school examination, whether they knew what was the meaning of the word ‘scandal.’ One little girl stepped vigorously forward, and throwing her hand up in that semaphore fashion by which children indicate the possession of knowledge, attracted the notice of the inspector. He desired her to answer the question, upon which she uttered these memorable words,—‘*Nobody does nothing, and everybody goes on telling of it everywhere.*’”



with the following remark:—"He will now know whether there is a Hell or not." I hope there is not one journalist of the present day who would dare to utter that surmise in his record. So much for the progress of freedom and the power of opinion.

At page 100, Vol. I., of his first "Life of Keats," Lord Houghton has quoted a literary portrait which he received from a lady who used to see him at Hazlitt's lectures at the Surrey Institution. The building was on the south, right-hand side, and close to Blackfriars Bridge. I believe that the whole of Hazlitt's lectures on the British poets and the writers of the time of Elizabeth were delivered in that institution during the years 1817 and 1818; shortly after which the establishment appears to have been broken up. The lady's remark upon the character and expression of Keats's features is both happy and true. She says:—"His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness; it had an expression *as if he had been looking on some glorious sight.*" That's excellent. "His mouth was full, and less intellectual than his other features." True again. But when our artist pronounces that "his eyes were large and *blue*," and that "his hair was *auburn*," I am naturally reminded of the "Chameleon" fable:—"They were *brown*, Ma'am—*brown*, I assure you!" The fact is, the lady was enchanted—and I cannot wonder at it—with the whole character of that beaming face; and "*blue*" and "*auburn*" being the favourite tints of the front divine in the lords of the creation the poet's eyes consequently became "*blue*" and his hair "*auburn*." Colours, however, vary with the prejudice or partiality of the spectator; and, moreover, people do not agree upon the most palpable prismatic tint. A writing-master whom we had at Enfield was an artist of more than ordinary merit, but he had one dominant defect, he could not distinguish between true blue and true green. So that, upon one occasion, when he was exhibiting to us a landscape he had just completed, I hazarded the critical question, why he painted his trees so *blue*? "Blue!" he replied, "What do you call green?" Reader, alter in your copy of the "Life of Keats," Vol. I., page 103, "eyes" *light hazel*, "hair" *lightish brown and wavy*.

The most perfect and favourite portrait of him was the one—the first—by Severn, published in Leigh Hunt's "Lord Byron and his Contemporaries,"

which I remember the artist sketching in a few minutes one evening, when several of Keats's friends were at his apartments in the Poultry. The portrait prefixed to the "Life" (also by Severn) is a most excellent one-look-and-expression likeness—an every-day and of "the earth, earthy" one; and the last, which the same artist painted, and which is now in the possession of Mr. John Hunter, of Craig Crook, Edinburgh, may be an equally felicitous rendering of one look and manner; but I do not intimately recognize it. There is another and a curiously unconscious likeness of him in the charming Dulwich Gallery of Pictures. It is in the portrait of Wouvermans, by Rembrandt. It is just so much of a resemblance as to remind the friends of the poet, although not such a one as the immortal Dutchman would have made had the poet been his sitter. It has a plaintive and melancholy expression which, I rejoice to say, I do not associate with Keats.

There is one of his attitudes during familiar conversation which at times (with the whole earnest manner and sweet expression of the man) ever presents itself to me as though I had seen him only last week. How gracious is the boon that the benedictions and the blessings in our life-careers last longer, and recur with stronger influences, than the ill-deeds and the curses! The attitude I speak of was that of cherishing one leg over the knee of the other, smoothing the instep with the palm of his hand. In this action I mostly associate him in an eager parley with Leigh Hunt in his little Vale of Health cottage. This position, if I mistake not, is in the last portrait of him at Craig Crook; if not, it is a reminiscent one, painted after his death. His stature could have been very little more than five feet; but he was, withal, compactly made and well-proportioned; and before the hereditary disorder which carried him off began to show itself, he was active, athletic, and enduringly strong—as the fight with the butcher gave full attestation.

His perfect friend, Joseph Severn, writes of him: "Here in Rome, as I write, I look back through forty years of worldly changes, and behold Keats's dear image again in memory. It seems as if he should be living with me now, inasmuch as I never could understand his strange and contradictory death, his falling away so suddenly from health and strength. He had a fine compactness of person, which we regard as the promise

of longevity, and no mind was ever more exultant in youthful feeling."

The critical world — by which term I mean the censorious portion of it, for many have no other idea of criticism than that of censure and objection — the critical world have so gloated over the feeler, or, if they will, the defective side of Keats's genius, and his friends have so amply justified him, that I feel inclined to add no more to the category of opinions than to say that the only fault in his poetry I could discover was a redundancy of imagery — that exuberance, by the way, being a quality of the greatest promise seeing that it is the constant accompaniment of a young and teeming genius. But his steady friend, Leigh Hunt, has rendered the amplest and truest record of his mental accomplishment in the preface to his "Foliage," quoted at page 150 of the first volume of the "Life of Keats;" and his biographer has so zealously, and, I would say, so amiably, summed up his character and intellectual qualities, that I can add no more than my assent.

With regard to Keats's political opinions I have little doubt that his whole civil creed was comprised in the master principle of "universal liberty" — viz: "Equal and stern justice to all, from the duke to the dustman."

There are constant indications through the memoirs and in the letters of Keats of his profound reverence for Shakespeare. His own intensity of thought and expression visibly strengthened with the study of his idol; and he knew but little of him till he had himself become an author. A marginal note by him in a folio copy of the plays is an example of the complete absorption his mind had undergone during the process of his matriculation; and, through life, however long with any of us, we are all in progress of matriculation, as we study the "myriad-minded's" system of philosophy. The note that Keats made was this: — "The genius of Shakespeare was an *innate universality*; wherefore he laid the achievements of human intellect prostrate beneath his indolent and kingly gaze; *he could do easily men's utmost*. His plan of tasks to come was not of this world. If what he proposed to do hereafter would not in the idea answer the aim, how tremendous must have been his conception of ultimates!" I question whether any one of the recognized high priests of the temple has uttered a loftier homily in honour of

the world's intellectual homage and renown.

A passage in one of Keats's letters to me evidences that he had a "firm belief in the immortality of the soul," and, as he adds, "so had Tom," whose eyes he had just closed. I once heard him launch into a rhapsody on the genius of Moses, who he said deserved the benediction of the whole world, were it only for his institution of the "Sabbath." But Keats was no "Sabbatarian" in the modern conventional acceptance of the term. "Every day," he once said, was "Sabbath" to him, as it is to every grateful mind, for blessings momentarily bestowed upon us. This recalls Wordsworth's lines, where he tells us that Nature,

Still constant in her worship, still  
Conforming to th' eternal will,  
Whether men sow or reap the fields,  
Divine admonishments she yields,  
That not by hand alone we live,  
Or what a hand of flesh can give;  
That every day should have some part  
Free for a Sabbath of the heart:  
So shall the seventh be truly blest,  
From morn to eve with hallow'd rest.

Sunday was indeed Keats's "day of rest," and I may add, too, of untainted mirth and gladness; as I believe, too, of unprofessing, unostentatious gratitude. His whole course of life, to its very last act, was one routine of unselfishness and of consideration for others' feelings. The approaches of death having come on, he said to his untiring nurse-friend: — "Severn — I — lift me up. I am dying. *I shall die easy; don't be frightened*; be firm, and thank God it has come."

Now burning through the inmost veil of Heaven

The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
Beams from the abode where the Eternal are.

From Chambers' Journal.

#### EXPLORATIONS OF A NATURALIST.

MR. THOMAS BELT, a young Englishman, skilled as a geologist and a zealous amateur in natural history, proceeded in 1868 to Nicaragua as an employé in connection with a gold-mining concern in that part of Central America. On returning home he has written a work partly descriptive of the country, but chiefly to tell us about the amazing abundance and variety of animal life which he discovered in his explorations. Some men

placed in his onerous position would have taken little heed of anything beyond their professional sphere. He, on the contrary, does not appear to have lost an opportunity of acquiring useful information and extending the boundaries of science—a good example to be followed in the circumstances.

In *The Naturalist in Nicaragua*, as his book is named, little is said of political affairs, and we can just gather that everything in that respect is in as rudimentary and hopeless a condition as is customary in dominions settled and mismanaged by Spaniards. For the country, nature has done much—lavished on it the finest of climates, clothed it in picturesque beauty, and given it a bounteous fertility. Man has done nothing. Indolence and incapacity reign over all. Landing in February at Greytown, on the Atlantic side of the country. Mr. Belt found himself on a level shore, with a back-ground of scrub and forest interspersed with lagoons and pools, less malarious than might be expected, in consequence of the blowing of the trade-winds. In a branch of the San Juan river he observed alligators hovering about for a prey. On walking into the swampy forest, the eye is dazzled with the number of parrots, toucans, and tanagers, also no end of beautiful insects, including striped and spotted butterflies, and hairy beetles of different colours. As insectivorous birds abstain from touching hairy caterpillars, nature has covered the beetles with hairs, so that they may be similarly saved from their winged enemies. Concealing their antennæ at their sides, for sake of protection, these beetles are described as imitative caterpillars. In this, we are reminded of different species of insects that are protected by their resemblance to leaves, twigs, and flowers.

In the centre of the country lies the great lake of Nicaragua, extending a hundred and twenty miles in length by a breadth of from fifty to sixty miles. This inland sea, as it may be called, has an outlet eastward by a river, which parts into two branches, one of them the Colorado, the other the San Juan. It was up the latter branch that our author proceeded by a monthly mail-boat to Chontales, the place of his destination. The boat was simply an open canoe, hollowed out of a log of cedar-tree, and had for crew several negroes, who propelled it with their oars. The voyage could not be called very agreeable; for the passen-

gers had to sit in the boat night and day, covered in the case of rain, by an umbrella and tarpaulin, but not so easily sheltered from the attacks of mosquitoes. Every morning there was a short relaxation. The canoe pulled ashore for breakfast, which was prepared by one of the negroes from a store of provisions; the repast being followed by a stroll in the shade of the forest, surrounded by palms, tree-ferns, and other tropical plants. After passing the point where the Colorado branched off, the country became more picturesque, the forests were grander, and the insects more numerous.

Lounging about at the periods of landing, opportunities were offered for studying the marvels of insect life. Two kinds of ants were specially interesting: the Ecitons, or foraging ants, which live wholly on insects or other prey; and the leaf-eating, or vegetable feeding ants. The former of these hunt about everywhere, search every cranny in the bark of trees for cockroaches, spiders, or any other animal they can attack, wrench in pieces, and carry off piecemeal to be devoured. Marching in armies three or four yards wide, they are the terror of grasshoppers and spiders, which in vain seek refuge in the trees. The ants climb up in pursuit: every twig is examined; and dropping in terror from the branches, the poor refugees fall to the ground into the midst of the devouring host. The spiders attempt to save themselves by spinning a fine thread, at the end of which they may suspend themselves in mid-air, swinging between foes above and below. In the armies of these Ecitons, there is a division of labour. Some of the larger size act as officers of companies, and by movements of their antennæ direct the line of march; others act as scouts or explorers; and a third class, in the capacity of labourers, dismember the bodies of the victims, and drag them away for food. These, like some other ants, follow their scouts more by scent than by sight. Led on by commanders, their armies are numbered by millions, and it would be difficult to conceive the vigour with which they carry out their expeditions. For intelligence, Mr. Belt places them at the head of the Articulata. Their cerebral ganglia are more developed than in other insects. Some instances are given of their ingenuity. On one occasion, a column on the march having come to a small rivulet to be crossed, they contrived by holding one to the other to form a bridge, three ants in breadth, over which

they all got in safety. Their discipline in obeying orders is spoken of as remarkable.

At about a hundred and twenty miles from Greytown, the canoe reached San Carlos, situated at the point where the river issues from the lake of Nicaragua. The height of the lake is not more than one hundred and seven feet above the mean sea-level, and as the greatest elevation between the Atlantic and Pacific is only about one hundred and thirty-three feet, it would be possible to construct a water-communication for ships between the two oceans. By taking advantage of the lake midway, a navigable channel with few locks might no doubt be effected. The author before us, however, points out some difficulties. The tendency in the connecting rivers to silt up is a serious objection, and so is the divided nationality of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. In the hands of the Anglo-Americans, these obstructions would disappear. At present, any native enterprise to carry out such an undertaking is altogether hopeless.

Reaching the lake, there was still a voyage of sixty miles, and then ensued a land-journey over hills amidst Indians whose primitive habits resemble those of the ancient Mexicans. Maize grown on the plains is the principal food of the inhabitants, as it has been from the earliest times; the method of preparing cakes of it, called *tortillas*, having undergone no change. The forests resemble nothing of the kind in Europe. From nearly every bough in the great towering trees, hangs a natural network of cables, which, intertwining, send down roots, that are cut by the natives, and form their only cordage. The trees, as well as the ground, exhibit large and beautiful flowers in immense profusion, which there is no winter to diminish. The timber is magnificent.

At a village adjoining the mines to which the author was bent, he settled down in a house with a veranda, not unlike a Swiss chalet. Connected with it was a garden for fruits and vegetables, but these were liable to the ravages of so many insects that the valuable produce came to little. The chief depredators were the leaf-eating ants (*Ecodoma*), which, streaming from the forests, laid bare and ragged every plant suitable to their appetite. For convenience, they came along "ant-paths," empty-handed, carrying away, in their return journey, the leaves in their mouths which they

had industriously stripped from the rose-trees and cabbages. As any ordinary method of obstructing these depredations would have been useless, Mr. Belt fell upon what promised a wholesale riddance. Tracing the ants to a mound full of excavations used as their habitation, he poured in a quantity of carbolie acid mixed with water, which flooding the burrows to the lowest level, produced a widespread destruction. Those ants that were not suffocated, rushed out in a state of extreme perplexity. After a consultation with outside marauders, working-parties were organized to carry away food from the stores to a new establishment which was forthwith formed. In performing this duty, the ants had to descend a steep sloping bank. Here, their ingenuity in saving labour was demonstrated. When they came to the top of the bank, they rolled down their burdens, which, on reaching the bottom, were immediately carried off by fresh relays of workers.

In the course of the mining excavations in which the writer was engaged, nests of these ants at a considerable depth were sometimes exposed, and an opportunity given of studying their interior economy. The younger members of the community, he says, are usefully employed in cutting up the leaves into small pieces for storage. Exempted from the heavy labour out of doors, they only ramble about for amusement. Like children who like to jump up behind a carriage, they take the liberty of leaping on the leaves which the elderly ants are dragging along the paths, and so get a ride homewards. The intelligence of these leaf-eating ants does not appear to be much inferior to the *Eciton* species. Near the gold mines there were tramways, which at first gave no little concern, for troops of marauders were apt to get crushed by the wheels of the cars. Reflecting on this source of danger to life and limb, the ants fell upon the rational device of tunnelling roads below the rails, which, as if by general order, were never afterwards crossed. One scarcely likes to read of a trick which a Spanish Don played off on a colony of leaf-eating ants. This personage discovered that they could be driven mad by tasting corrosive sublimate. Sprinkling a little of this powder in one of their paths, the ants no sooner touched it than they ran about as if frantic, attacking other ants that came in their way, and tremendous battles ensued. News of the



commotion being carried to their nest, ants of a powerful and determined character issued forth, in the capacity of magistrates, to allay the tumult, but they, too, coming in contact with the corrosive sublimate, became as mad as the others, and the conflict went on till the field was strewn with the wounded and dismembered bodies of the combatants.

That these ants actually eat the broken-down leaves with which their nests are stored, seems to be by no means conclusive. Our author offers an explanation which may not, perhaps, be readily accepted by naturalists. He gives it as his belief that the ants make use of the leaves as manure, or mass of decaying matter, "on which grows a minute species of fungus, on which they feed—that they are in reality mushroom growers, and eaters." To verify this supposition, he mentions having discovered in the interior of a nest "a speckled brown, flocculent, spongy-looking mass of a light and loosely connected substance." The mass, he adds, was "overgrown and lightly connected together by a minute white fungus, that ramified in every direction through it." Such, he contends, is the ant-food, which is carefully watched, and carried away in cases of danger to the community. No doubt, any mass of broken leaves would, in the confinement of a cell in a warm climate, soon become putrid, even although the ants, as we are informed, have the skill to construct shafts for ventilation. The rather curious and confidently maintained theory, that these so called leaf-eating ants do not eat leaves at all, but carry them off in order to rear fungi for food on the decaying mass, is worth the consideration of investigators acquainted with this branch of science.

Mr. Belt gives some valuable information respecting the geology of the district, and the nature of the lodes, which will be appreciated by those concerned in gold-mining. For all useful details, we refer them to his very interesting work. We might offer the same counsel to all who wish to know the social characteristics of the country. What the narrator says of the sloth and ignorance of even the more affluent classes, is past ordinary credence. Sunk in self-indulgence, they would prefer to submit to any inconvenience rather than put themselves to the smallest industrial exertion. The general ignorance is grotesquely pictured in describing a person of more than or-

inary accomplishments, whose house was hospitably opened during a journey across the country. He possessed "a small library of books, nearly all being missals and prayer-books;" and he had "a little knowledge of geography," but as regards England he was sadly deficient. That it "was a small island, he admitted was new to him, as he thought it was part of the United States, or at least joined to them." As a climax to his ignorance, he asked "if it was true that Rome was one of the four quarters of the globe." Droll, but very melancholy! The ignorance of these Central Americans appears to go far beyond that of the most abject and illiterate of the population in Great Britain.

We have little space for the further explorations of this indefatigable naturalist. His accounts of humming-birds, gems of beauty; of the nests of certain birds hanging from trees; of parrots which construct their dwellings in the ground near the nests of ants, conveniently close to a highly relished variety of food; and of wasps that have strange ways of living, all must be passed over. Ants of one kind or other, we should say, form the staple topic of the volume. They cast up in all quarters. One species of a small size differ very distinctly from all the rest. Instead of making their nests in the ground, and roving about in a predatory fashion, they assume the duty of protecting plants in which they take up their residence. On the plant that specially commands their services there grow hollow thorns, adapted for their abode. There they continually reside, deriving food from a minute kind of fruit of a luscious description suitable for their sustenance. These fruits do not ripen all at once. They come to maturity one after the other, to keep up a proper succession of nutriment; the ants always running about to examine the progress of ripening. In requital for board and lodging, these valiant little warriors, like household troops, defend the plant against all comers, whether mammalia or articlata. Few things are calculated to impress us more strongly with the wonders of animal life in this part of the world, than the description of these tiny warrior ants. To Mr. Belt, for what he has related on this and other subjects, all proper thanks must be awarded. We heartily commend his unassuming work to the notice of all who are curious in natural history.

W. C.



MR. EDWARD ATKINSON, an American writer on *Cotton Culture in the South*, once predicted that cotton would be sown in hotbeds and planted out. A recent official report from Georgia tells us that an experiment of this kind has been tried by a planter there with perfect success. He dug long pits about three or four feet deep, and had a number of boxes made with shavings, larger at the top than at the bottom, placed them on planks at the bottom of this pit, filled them with manure and soft earth, and planted his seed in January. He covered the pits with canvas at night and in very cold weather; and in April, when people were preparing to plant, he had stalks a foot high. He then carried them out on their planks to the field, dug his holes, slipped his plant down, and raised his box out, and thus the plant never felt the change. He made nearly two bales to the acre, and contends that it was easier to do this than haul out his stable manure. "He is a very practical man," adds the chronicler of this apparently well-authenticated piece of intelligence, "and has made a fortune, which is pretty good evidence of his good sense." The same report states that it is likely that cotton will be grown in California to a certain extent. Some experiments in 1871 were so favourable, that in 1872 a crop of 1500 bales was expected, which would be a crop of about one bale per acre. Last year, it was thought, the average would be more than doubled. The Californian cotton had a ready home market, being found to possess a remarkable fitness "for combination with wool in various fabrics."

Academy.

NEWS has been received by the French Geographical Society from the expedition to Terra del Fuego, under M. Pertuiset. The landing was effected on December 7 last, and the members of the expedition, armed to the teeth, at once proceeded inland in the direction of Cape Horn. Their first discovery was an exquisitely beautiful lake, from twenty to twenty-five kilometres round, covered with thousands of small birds, ducks, and geese. The party gave it the name of their leader. At its south extremity a group of Fuegians was discovered, all of whom escaped, with the exception of a woman and two children. In return for some presents the woman gave M. Pertuiset "a piece of tin from a box of sardines;" she was, adds M. Pertuiset, "belle pour sa race." The Fuegians appeared to be hostilely disposed according to last accounts. Only one native hut was discovered, lately abandoned; it contained nothing but dead rats.

The report of the expedition is accompanied by some details from the French Consul at Valparaiso, relating to the territory of Magellan. That territory includes all the south-

ern part of Chili, from ocean to ocean, from the isle of Chiloe to Cape Horn. The climate is cold in autumn and winter, but in the other seasons either great heat prevails or violent west winds, blowing for whole days together, which render it impossible to get out of doors.

The Chilean colony of Punta Arenas, founded in 1843 in the peninsula of Brunswick, has been very flourishing for the last four or five years. Its proximity to Terra del Fuego will allow M. Pertuiset's expedition to find a refuge there in case of necessity. Its chief wealth is its mining industry; gold is found in the river in considerable quantities, and the supply of coal is very abundant. The Fuegians, as well as most of the natives of the islands in the Straits of Magellan, are savages; but the Patagonians, though nomads and hunters, faithfully observe their treaties. Their number is decreasing every day, but from what precise causes does not appear to be known.

Academy.

IN continuation of his exquisite researches on the phenomenon of flight (*Comptes Rendus*, January 12, 1874), M. Marcy has made a series of observations which prove how important a part the onward movement of a bird plays in increasing the efficiency of each wing stroke. For supposing that in its descent the wing did not continually come in contact with a fresh volume of air, it would act at a disadvantage, because the downward impulse which, at the commencement of each stroke, it gives to the air below it, would make that air so much less efficient a resisting medium; whilst, by continually coming in contact with a fresh body of air, the wing is always acting on it to the best advantage. For this reason, when a bird commences its flight, it turns towards the wind if possible, to make up for its lack of motion on starting.

Nature.

A WASTED LIFE.—What a distressing spectacle is that of a man of talent approaching to old age not only without the consciousness of having employed his abilities to any permanent good purpose for the benefit of mankind, but with the sense of having written in behalf of errors and exploded fallacies all the time, and in favour of a party which has come to natural ruin in the course of time, and can now do nothing for him—not even give him sympathy in his misfortune. When such a man reflects on his wasted existence, and compares his position with that of one who took a directly opposite course—that is, worked for good and not for evil, or, it may be, worked uselessly and misspent his life—how painful must be his feelings, if at all sensitive!